



Louth Volunteer Centre
Strategic Plan
2021 – 2025

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About Us

Louth Volunteer Centre was initially established as Drogheda Volunteer Centre by a group of community volunteers associated with Drogheda Community and Voluntary Forum to support the development of volunteering infrastructure in the area. It was officially opened by President Mary McAleese in 2003. It was incorporated as a company in 2005. In 2010 the service expanded to become Louth Volunteer Centre with offices in Drogheda and Dundalk and regular outreach services in Ardee and Omeath. Louth Volunteer Centre is an independent Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) and Charity registered with the Charities Regulator.

Louth Volunteer Centre is also a member of a national network of Volunteer Centres – by the end of 2021 there will be a Volunteer Centre in every county in Ireland, 28 in total, all of whom are affiliated to Volunteer Ireland. Our affiliation to Volunteer Ireland affords us access to I-VOL, the national volunteering database, which we manage at local level. We are also required to adhere to the Volunteer Centre Quality Standards framework as a condition of both our affiliation and core funding.

Since establishment as Louth Volunteer Centre we have been the hub for volunteering in County Louth and are highly regarded and recognised at local community and statutory level. Louth Volunteer Centre has a history of being a progressive organisation working collegially and collaboratively with colleagues at local and national level to advance the cause of volunteering and its enriching benefits for both individual and community.

Whilst we receive core funding through an annual grant to Strengthen and Support Volunteering from the Department of Rural and Community Development, we supplement this with project work that both furthers our objectives and enhances the sustainability of our organisation.

Our Work

As per our constitution the principle activity of the company is to promote the benefits of volunteering to the inhabitants of Louth and the surrounding area by association with statutory and voluntary authorities in a common aim to advance education and provide facilities in the interest of Social Welfare and other charitable purposes of benefit to the Community of Louth and its surrounding areas; and to provide support, training and advice which enhances the effectiveness of organisations involving volunteers to promote charitable activities on behalf of the Community of Louth and its environs.

To that end we offer a support and guidance service to individuals and Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) to reach their individual and collective goals while making a significant contribution to their local community and society; and advocate on behalf of volunteers and volunteering in County Louth at local and national level.

Our People

Our Board

Louth Volunteer Centre is a registered charity and Company Limited by Guarantee. The organisation is overseen by a board of up to 12 voluntary Directors. Board members serve a term of up to 5 years and officers of the board up to 3 years. Louth Volunteer Centre board members are appointed on the basis of geographically representing the population of Louth County and having the sufficient qualifications, contacts and experience to deliver the objectives of the Volunteer Centre. The board have responsibility for ensuring that the organisation fulfils its legal obligations and is properly financially managed; they are also responsible for the strategic development of the Centre and ensuring that it operates effectively and efficiently.

As at December 2020 the Directors of our Board are:

Jonathan Lynch	Community First Responders; Chair Dunshaughlin Community Festival
Julie Devitt	CIMA Management Accountant
Kevin Light	Leadership Coach; Company Director
Siobhan Molloy	Executive Director, Horseware; Psychotherapist
Mary Cleary	CPA Qualified Tax Advisor; Volunteer Representative
Geraldine McStravick	Human Resources Management Professional

Our Team

Louth Volunteer Centre has a core staff team of 2 full time and 1 part time staff member, funded through the Department of Rural and Community Development's grant to Strengthen and Support Volunteering. Other staff may be employed on specific purpose contracts associated with project delivery.

This staff team is strengthened by the support of a team of volunteers and interns.

See Appendix I for Organisation Chart outlining our team and their roles as of December 2020.

Context of this Strategic Plan

In 2013 Louth Volunteer Centre embarked upon a strategic planning process which resulted in the publication of our 2015-2019 Strategic Plan. The external environment has changed considerably since the development of that plan, not least in the context of the COVID crisis in 2020-2021. The volunteering environment has also been significantly altered and this document has been developed with an awareness of reference to the National Volunteering Strategy 2020-2025 and the County Louth Volunteering Framework 2020-2023. In relation to the latter Louth Volunteer Centre commissioned and was very involved in the research for the Framework and so we could draw on the very rich data and learning from this in the development of our own strategic plan. See Appendix VIII for a comparison of strategic objectives across these documents.

Our network of Volunteer Centres is also now truly national as there will be a Volunteer Centre in every county in Ireland by the end of 2021 and the role of the Network is significantly expanded in

relation to contributions at national level since our first original Strategic Plan was published. Finally, the introduction of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 provide a blueprint for a better and more sustainable future for all. We have responded to that call to action and have mapped our strategic objectives to these goals so as to identify and measure how our work can contribute towards their implementation and delivery.

Strategic Planning Process

In developing this Strategic Plan we undertook a three phase process that has grassroots community development methodologies at its heart.



- **Identity:** Consultative input gathering was utilised at this stage to empower stakeholders to respond to the following questions and co-create our organisational vision, purpose and values
 - ❖ Why does Louth Volunteer Centre exist?
 - ❖ Who do we serve?
 - ❖ What do we do for those we serve?
- **Opportunity:** This phase involved consultative testing of assumptions and outputs from the identity phase. Key external stakeholders from both community and statutory agencies were involved in this phase – identifying opportunities to fulfil the vision and purpose statements generated in phase one
- **Planning:** This phase involved the Louth Volunteer Centre team generating new strategic objectives informed by outputs in stages one and two and co-designing the structure, resources and plan to achieve these objectives. Outputs from this phase include high level outcomes, how we will action and measures of success for each objective; creating the framework for our work for the coming years.

Further details relating to the planning process, outputs from each stage and stakeholder engagement are available in Appendices II – VII.

Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

Our community is enriched by the benefits of volunteering

Purpose (Mission)

We advance the practice, processes and benefits of volunteering

Our values

- We foster the inherent connectivity of volunteering
- We celebrate volunteering
- We value volunteering
- We value diversity
- We value partnership
- We value our people

Through our work

- Volunteering is enriching
- Volunteering is valued
- Volunteering is celebrated
- Volunteering is diverse
- Volunteering creates connections

Guiding Principles

Through our identity workshop some key underlying assumptions emerged that inform our Vision, Purpose and Strategic Objectives

We believe that through the practice of volunteering those volunteering, those organising volunteers and the recipients of voluntary activity benefit from and are enriched by the process of volunteering.

Taking that assumption into account we identified a need to define what we mean by volunteering.

We define volunteering as:

Freely offering to do something that meets a need in the community that would not be otherwise met.

Strategic Objectives



Strategic Objective One

Promote awareness of the benefits of volunteering

Strategic Objective Two

Advance Louth Volunteer Centre as a facilitator of volunteering

Strategic Objective Three

Increase quality in volunteering

Strategic Objective Four

Advocate for diversity in and access to volunteering

Strategic Objective Five

Strengthen our competence, capacity and sustainability



Strategic Objective One

Promote awareness of the benefits of volunteering

We will promote, advocate for, and showcase the benefits of volunteering for the volunteer, those organising volunteers, the recipients of voluntary activity and society as a whole.

High Level Outcomes for Strategic Objective One:

- We inspire, motivate and stimulate interest in volunteering
- Volunteers are aware of the benefits of volunteering and make informed decisions on their volunteering journey
- Volunteering is recognised as a practical and powerful mechanism to support the delivery of community objectives

We will progress this objective by...

- **Developing** marketing and promotion campaigns to include outreach; social media; traditional media; case studies and innovative approaches to inspire and motivate prospective volunteers
- **Delivering** a comprehensive and current database of volunteering opportunities
- **Advocating** for and participating in the development of public policy that impacts positively on volunteerism at local and national level
- **Promoting** the benefits of volunteering for both individual and community wellbeing
- **Supporting** volunteers and prospective volunteers to see how their skills, interest, talents and experience can contribute to their community

We know we are making progress in relation to this objective when...

- There is a stronger culture of volunteering in our community
- There is a greater awareness of the inherent value of volunteering to both individual and community

Sustainable Development Goals





Strategic Objective Two

Advance Louth Volunteer Centre as a facilitator of volunteering

We will promote Louth Volunteer Centre as an access point, advocate for and facilitator of volunteering to the public, statutory agencies, local government, the business sector, community & voluntary sector and any other stakeholders

High Level Outcomes for Strategic Objective Two:

- Louth Volunteer Centre is positioned as the local agency for volunteering
- Access to volunteering and opportunities to volunteer are enhanced through partnership and strategic alliances

We will progress this objective by...

- **Positioning** Louth Volunteer Centre as the 'one stop shop' for all things volunteer and volunteering related
- **Representing** Louth Volunteer Centre on appropriate local structures & advancing the cause of volunteering within those structures
- **Collaborating** with our colleagues in Louth County Council, Louth Leader Partnership and Louth Public Participation Network
- **Exploring** partnership and project opportunities with Education, Business, Sport, HSE, Heritage, Environment and others delivering community objectives
- **Supporting** the establishment of and acting as Secretariat to the County Louth Volunteering Framework Implementation Group

We know we are making progress in relation to this objective when...

- New collaborative projects are delivered which position Louth Volunteer Centre as the local facilitator of volunteering; and advance access to and impact of volunteering in our community
- Services offered by Louth Volunteer Centre are more widely known, understood and accessed

Sustainable Development Goals





Strategic Objective Three

Increase quality in volunteering

We will facilitate, support and develop best practice in the volunteering environment so that volunteers will have a positive experience of and re-engage with volunteering and our community will be enriched by the benefits of volunteering

High Level Outcomes for Strategic Objective Three:

- The volunteering environment is facilitated and supported
- The quality of the volunteering experience is enhanced for all stakeholders

We will progress this objective by...

- **Providing** a support service to Volunteer Involving Organisations and those involving volunteers in their work
- **Delivering** capacity building training to local Volunteer Leaders and those involving volunteers in their work
- **Connecting** Volunteer Involving Organisations and those involving volunteers in their work with one another to share learning and best practice
- **Recognising** good practice in the volunteering environment
- **Contributing** to, highlighting, and implementing national initiatives to support the volunteering environment such as a volunteering code of conduct

We know we are making progress in relation to this objective when...

- There is an increased capacity to engage volunteers in our community
- Volunteers report a positive experience of volunteering in our community

Sustainable Development Goals





Strategic Objective Four

Advocate for diversity in and access to volunteering

We will support increased participation and diversity in volunteering including embracing new trends and innovation; advocating on behalf of a broad spectrum of our community and engaging with diverse populations to empower those who wish to volunteer to have the opportunity to do so

High Level Outcomes for Strategic Objective Four:

- The volunteering base is widened and diversified
- Our community is enriched by enhanced access to volunteering opportunities

We will progress this objective by...

- **Actively** promoting volunteering and volunteerism to people of different backgrounds and circumstances in our community
- **Establishing** a County Volunteer Reserve Corps which embraces diversity and inclusivity
- **Supporting** those who involve volunteers and our local community & voluntary sector to recognise and value engaging diverse volunteers
- **Identifying** projects and programmes which build capacity in and enhance participation of people of different backgrounds and circumstances with volunteering in our community
- **Responding** to trends in volunteering and needs in our community to empower those who wish to volunteer with the opportunity to do so

We know we are making progress in relation to this objective when...

- The diversity of our communities and of people of different backgrounds and circumstances is reflected more proportionately within the volunteering community
- A diverse population of volunteers have the opportunity to participate in volunteering that is impactful

Sustainable Development Goals





Strategic Objective Five

Strengthen our competence, capacity and sustainability

We commit to the development of our people and organisation; governance best practice; strategic decision making and financial stability so that Louth Volunteer Centre's capacity to serve our purpose within our community is sustained in the long term

High Level Outcomes for Strategic Objective Five:

- Louth Volunteer Centre meets the highest standards of Governance and Accountability
- Our team have the competency and capacity to deliver our strategic goals
- Our work is future proofed so we can continue to fulfil our vision and mission for our community

We will progress this objective by...

- **Ensuring** that governance structures, practices and policies meet best practice standards within our sector
- **Managing** our financial resources carefully and transparently to ensure compliance with funder and regulatory requirements, and to ensure the sustainability of our organisation
- **Evaluating** our work on an ongoing basis to verify that we are working to the highest standards; 'living by' our values and focused on our Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives
- **Fostering** a learning culture within our organisation and supporting our team – board, staff, volunteers and interns – to carry out their roles effectively
- **Engaging** with national structures, particularly the National Volunteer Centres Network, to enhance our capacity to fulfil our purpose a
- **Enhancing** our reputation by delivering programmes and projects to the highest standards of funder and community expectations

We know we are making progress in relation to this objective when...

- We attain external measures of corporate good practice – such as compliance with the Charities Regulator Governance Code and achievement of Volunteer Centres Quality Standard
- Satisfaction ratings by team and service users are consistently positive
- Sustainable funding is attained

Sustainable Development Goals



Monitoring and Implementation

Implementation

Successful implementation of a strategic plan requires aligning all aspects of our work with its vision and objectives for our organisation. All planning, reporting and progress monitoring should contribute to the achieving of our strategic vision and organisation objectives. The document should therefore be a living document and is integrated into our work at all levels of Louth Volunteer Centre.

We will map our annual workplans back to our strategic plan and ensure we are working towards our high level outcomes; we will create Key Performance Indicators that show progress towards our strategic objectives; Reporting at team and board level will be mapped to our strategic objectives; We will develop further strategies to complement our Strategic Plan and empower us to achieve our objectives such as funding and communications strategies.

Monitoring

The COVID crisis demonstrated the need to be adaptable and to regularly review strategy to ensure it is effective and serves our purpose as an organisation. We will schedule a comprehensive annual review of our strategic plan by board and team. This will include

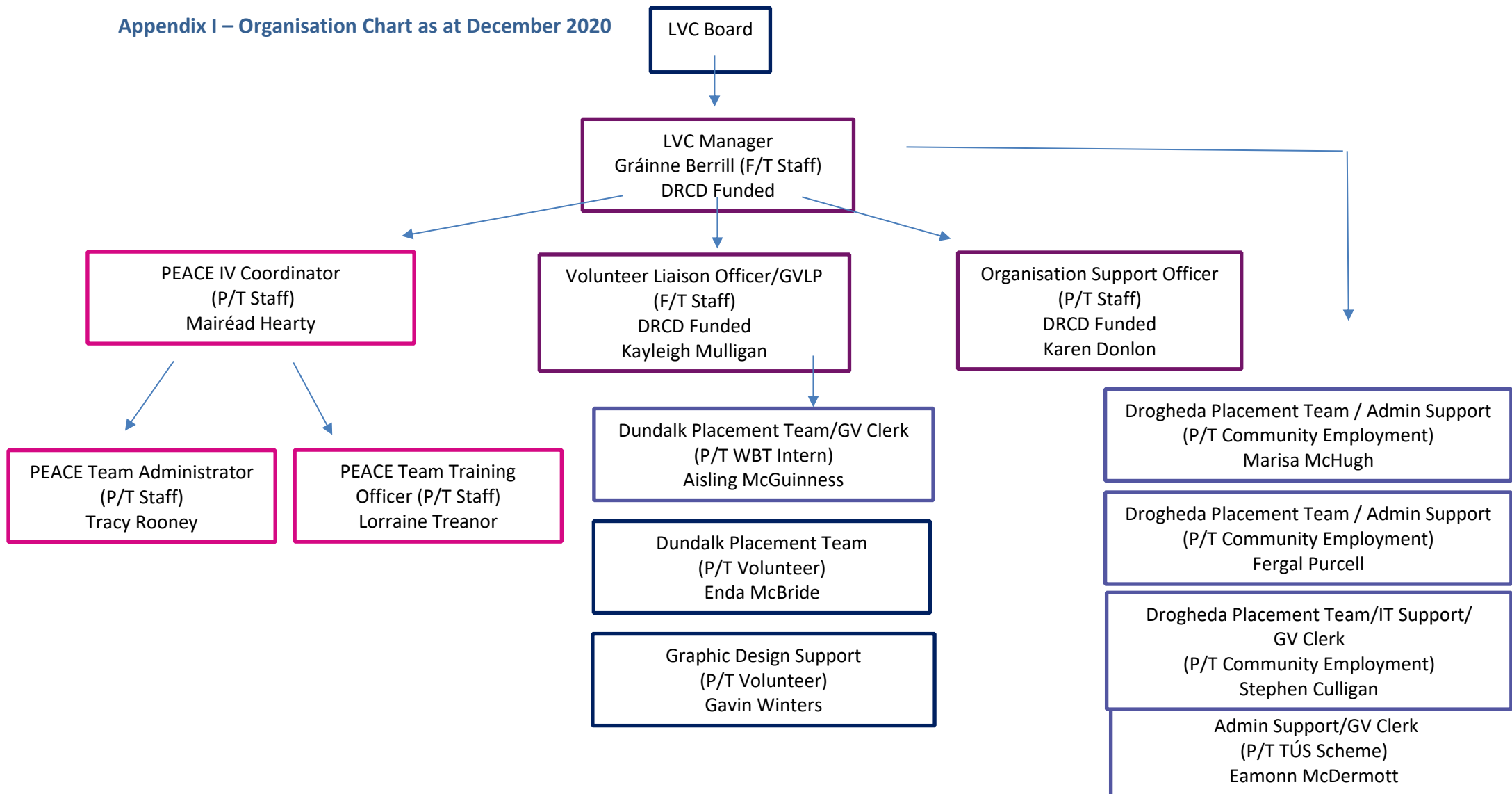
- reviewing our vision and purpose to ensure they are having a positive impact on organisation decision making
- reviewing the plan, and consequent work plans, against new opportunities and risks
- identifying what has been missed and review whether this should be incorporated into a revised plan
- considering whether any strategic assumptions have changed and what impact, if any, this might have on our strategic plan
- discussing strategies taken to embed the plan into our work and whether these are operationally and strategically effective

Responsibility

Responsibility for the monitoring and review of this document will sit with the Louth Volunteer Centre board who may delegate responsibility to the Governance subgroup and/or the Louth Volunteer Centre Manager.

Appendices

Appendix I – Organisation Chart as at December 2020



Appendix II – Strategic Planning Process

Stage one: Identity

The purpose of the identity exploration phase was to consider the questions:

- Why does Louth Volunteer Centre exist?
- Who do we serve?
- What do we do for those we serve?

Stage One Step One – Exploration

We held a two-hour workshop on 14th September 2020 attended by Louth Volunteer Centre team and board members. See Appendix One for attendees listing.

The following Statements and assumptions emerged from this session which were then shared with attendees on 30th September with an invitation to comment on and respond to them.

What is volunteering?

- Connection (to people, community, self)
- Volunteering can....
 - Add to quality of life
 - Expand/Enhance perspective, skills, experience
 - Embrace diversity
 - Support equality
 - Improve mental health
 - Enrich our community
- Volunteering gives...
 - A sense of making a difference
 - A sense of being part of a bigger story

Why does Louth Volunteer Centre exist?

- Because of a belief in the enriching benefits of volunteering for the individual and the community
- To support those who want to volunteer
- To support those who cannot access volunteering themselves
- To champion volunteering
- To create community connections
- To make the community better
- To advance volunteering
- To foster the luxury and privilege of volunteering
- To foster the inherent connectivity of volunteering

We further explored our identity questions and tested the above assumptions in workshops with Louth Comhairle na nÓg¹ members on the 21st, 22nd and 23rd September. Many of the same assumptions and statements emerged from this process, validating the core themes from our team workshop.



What is volunteering?

Volunteering is

- enriching yourself and others through giving your time
- building your community and yourself
- doing it from your heart

What is a Volunteer Centre? – the responses focused very much on what we should do, as you might expect with younger people

Louth Volunteer Centre....

- organises and oversees volunteering in Louth
- gets involved in mentoring young people
- appreciates volunteers (Eg recognition events)
- is good craic
- is prepared to help anyone (all ages)
- has opportunities to volunteer
- communicates directly with young people about volunteering opportunities (Eg through schools; on Instagram; holding showcase events/nights)

¹ Comhairle na nÓg is the children and youth council of Ireland, giving young people aged under 18 the opportunity to be involved in the development of local services and policy. Louth Comhairle na nÓg is structured in accordance with Municipal Districts with a council group in Drogheda, Dundalk and Ardee.

Kevin Light, Louth Volunteer Centre board member leading on the strategic planning process and Gráinne Berrill, Louth Volunteer Centre manager came together to draw out vision and purpose statements from this consultation process (see page xx). The Vision identified for Louth Volunteer Centre places the experience of volunteering at the core of who we are and informs our purpose and the guiding principles for our work, all of which were identified through this process.

Stage One Step Two– Validation

The LVC Board reviewed and ratified the proposed vision and mission statements at a board meeting on October 19th 2020. The statements were shared back to participants of consultation for validation. We further tested assumptions inherent in these new Vision and Mission statements with a variety of key stakeholders who were further invited to contribute to the Opportunity phase of the process (see below).

Statutory / Sectoral Agencies

A focus group session was held on 26th of November 2020 and contributors were invited to examine our Vision and Mission statements through the prism of a SWOT analysis. See Appendix Two for listing of contributors to this process.

Feedback in relation to the Vision and Mission statements included:

- Both are concise and clear – can see what who we are and what we do
- Both are to the point and feel relevant
- Vision inherently has the potential to build a socially integrated community
- Purpose/Mission underscores the vision and they feel interconnected

Factors identified as having importance to our success in delivering on our vision included:

- Our people
- Partnership
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Openness

Stage two: Opportunity

Within the above focus group session and in subsequent one to one interviews key stakeholders were invited to reflect on what opportunities may be available to assist Louth Volunteer Centre in furthering our Vision and Mission.

Opportunities identified

Business Community

- Work as partners with the business sector and individual companies – shift messaging towards that of ‘we are helping you’/‘what’s in it for you’
- Explore the establishment of a Corporate programme – be clear eyed about resourcing and investment required

- Connected communities as a tool in attracting investment to the area – Louth Volunteer Centre to work with business structures (Chambers, LEO) to enhance ‘community connectivity’ through volunteering
- Drogheda Chamber is in the process of establishing a ‘Community & Inclusion’ sub-committee
- Volunteering as an access point to community for staff in multinational companies based in the local area.

Sports

- Dormant accounts funding – volunteer retention (LVC already engaging with LSP on this)
- Create a resource to match club need with volunteers (LVC already engaging with LSP on this)
- Louth Sports Partnership development officer funding now connected to community engagement – offering potential for LVC particularly within codes such as FAI
- Challenge for sports clubs in engaging volunteers as a result of legislative and governance requirements – can Louth Volunteer Centre support?

Health

- HSE as a partner – Sláintecare
- Volunteer reserves as an opportunity within that space

Community / General

- Louth Volunteer Centre to take ownership of volunteering at County level
- County Louth Volunteering Framework implementation group – Louth VC as secretariat for that group, opportunity for regular connection and engagement
- Interagency approach, cross sectoral referrals and interconnectivity of work (eg Local Employment Service refer clients to Louth Volunteer Centre; Louth Volunteer Centre refer volunteers to Local Employment Service)
- The lifecycle of volunteering and new ways to engage volunteering (Example of the digital neighbourhood)
- The growth of informal volunteering. How can Louth Volunteer Centre nurture this without stifling it? Potential for a communications campaign? The Kindness App – reporting and celebrating acts of Kindness in our community

DkIT

- DkIT in process of developing their own strategic plan at the moment – engage with this process to position volunteering within it

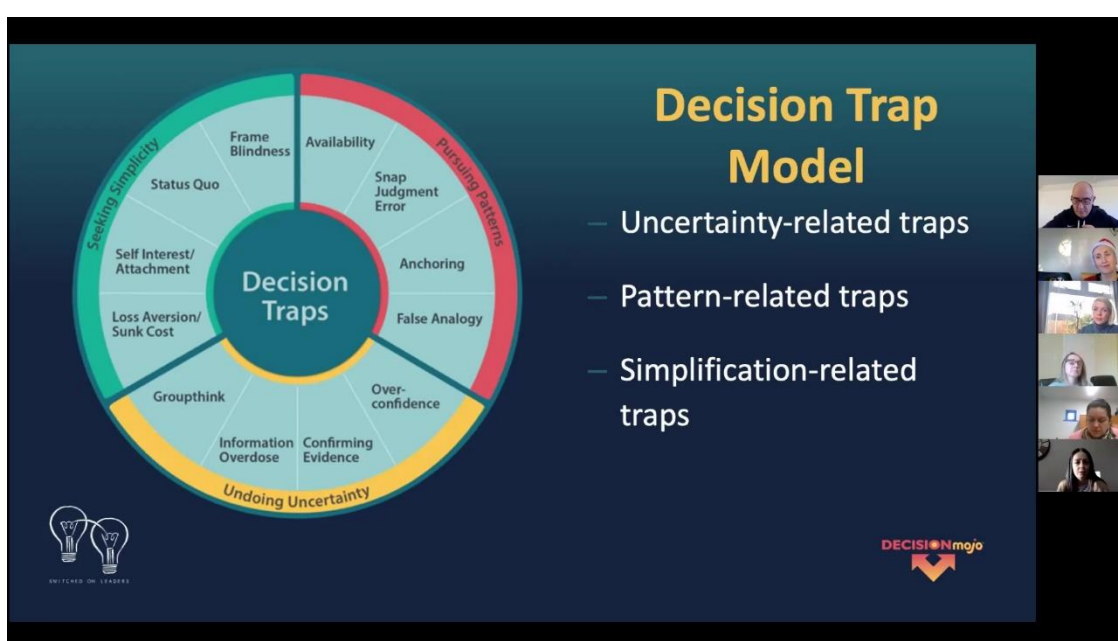
Stage three: Planning

The purpose of this phase was to identify the objectives that fulfil the emergent feedback from the identity and opportunity phases and design the structure, resources and plan we will need to achieve our objectives.

Key to the development of any Strategic Plan is quality decision making. A workshop on Decision Making delivered by Kevin Light (www.decisionmojo.ie) was held on 17th December 2020 and attended by Louth Volunteer Centre staff and board members (see Appendix Three for attendees). The goal of this session was to equip attendees to look with clarity at our what we need to focus on in order to honour our purpose and move towards our vision and to have clear direction when evaluating our strategic objectives.

The workshop covered:

- Perspective - What decision traps do we need to avoid in choosing what to focus on?
- What options exist on which we might focus our energy on?
- What information do we really need to decide which of these to focus on?
- How will we make this decision?



Attendees at this session then used the tools and strategies gained from the decision-making workshops to review our strategic objectives as opportunities to fulfil our vision and honour our purpose.

The discussion focused on the necessity of identifying opportunities and objectives that will help us to fulfil our vision, the 'why' of our existence as an organisation. Whilst a variety of new strategic objective options had been developed, informed by outputs from consultations to that point, attendees reviewed current Louth Volunteer Centre objectives through the prism of our new strategic vision and purpose. This resulted in a validation, reframing and extension of our strategic objectives with specific emphasis on how they move us toward our Vision.

Emergent also from this session and our previous consultative input sessions were key value statements that, alongside our guiding principle, underpin our activities and inform how we work towards our vision as an organisation and as individuals within our organisation.

This process was followed up by a consultative testing phase where Louth Volunteer Centre board and staff members once again reviewed strategic objectives through the prism of our vision and

purpose. Our Strategic Objectives were subsequently endorsed and ratified by the Louth Volunteer Centre board.

Appendix III – Strategic Planning Session One Attendees

Kevin Light, Board Member
 Siobhán Molloy, Board Member
 Gráinne Berrill, LVC Manager
 Kayleigh Mulligan, Volunteer Liaison / GV Liaison Person; North Louth
 Karen Donlon, Organisation Support Officer
 Mairead Hearty, Good Relations Initiative (GRI) Coordinator
 Tracy Rooney, Finance; HR & GRI Administrator
 Lorraine Treanor, Training Officer, GRI

Appendix IV – Strategic Planning Session Three Attendees

Maeve Harkin, Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) Manager
 Mary Deery, Community Development Officer and Age Action Friendly Lead, Louth County Council
 Yvonne O’ Brien, County Librarian, Louth County Library
 Graham Russell, Coordinator, Louth Local Sports Partnership
 Gráinne Carroll, Louth Public Participation Network Resource Worker
 Michael Gaynor, Dundalk Chamber of Commerce
 Robert Murray, President, Drogheda Chamber of Commerce
 Derek Crilly, Sports & Societies Coordinator, Dundalk IT
 Kevin Light, Board Member, Louth Volunteer Centre

Appendix V Strategic Planning Session Three Invitees

Agency	Individual	Role
Louth Leader Partnership	Maeve Harkin	SICAP Manager
Louth Leader Partnership	Ciaran Reid	CEO
Louth Leader Partnership	Mary O'Neill	LEADER Programmes Manager
Louth County Council	Paddy Donnelly	Director of Services - Community, Quality of Life & Creativity
Louth County Council	John Lawrence	Senior Executive Officer - Community Section
Louth County Council	Mary Deery	Community Development Officer/Age Friendly Coordinator
Louth County Council	Yvonne O'Brien	County Librarian
Louth Public Participation Network	Gráinne Carroll	PPN Resource Worker
Louth County Council	Graham Russell	Louth Sports Partnership Coordinator
HSE	Paula Campbell	Community Call Forum representative
HSE	Martina Ralph	Community Call Forum representative
TUSLA	Annemarie Kidd/Paula McCabe	Child & Family Services Network Coordinators (North/South Louth)

Louth Public Participation Network		All Secretariat Members
Red Cross Ireland Community Services	Paraic McGahey	National Director of Community Services
Louth Tidy Towns Together	Mary Murtagh/Larry Magnier	Chair
DEASP	Anne Keeley	Regional Director
LMETB	Sadie Ward McDermott	Education Officer
Macra na Feirme	Jennifer Arthur	Regional Development Officer
FAI	Mick Neville	Regional Development Officer
Louth GAA	Peter Fitzpatrick	Chair
Drogheda Chamber	Irene McKeown	Manager
Dundalk Chamber	Brenda McGeeney	Manager
DkIT	Irene McCausland	Vice President - responsibility for community
DkIT	Derek Crilly	Sports & Societies Officer

Appendix VI – Strategic Planning Session Four Attendees

Kevin Light, Board Member

Gráinne Berrill, LVC Manager

Kayleigh Mulligan, Volunteer Liaison / GV Liaison Person; North Louth

Karen Donlon, Organisation Support Officer

Mairead Hearty, Good Relations Initiative (GRI) Coordinator

Tracy Rooney, Finance; HR & GRI Administrator

Lorraine Treanor, Training Officer, GRI

Appendix VII – SWOT Analysis

Louth Volunteer Centre Strategic Planning Process – Focus Group 26th November 2020

Output – SWOT analysis of new Vision and Mission

Participants also reflected on Louth Volunteer Centre's current role in the community through this process

Agency	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Drogheda Chamber	Passion of team for volunteering – this is captured in the Vision and Mission Openness to collaboration	Expectation of support in delivering strategic plan – requests for support may not be heard	Community & Inclusion sub committee being established in Drogheda Chamber Utilising the Chamber as a communication vehicle Access to the Chamber council	Current market conditions
Dundalk Chamber	The desire of local business to get involved in their community – Mission speaks to this	Are we connecting to the right people within our plan?	Community engagement is a selling point in attracting FDI Work collaboratively with local chamber to enhance	Regular volunteers stepping back as a result of COVID conditions

			the 'community connectivity' of the town Volunteering as an opportunity for people working in multinationals to feel connected to their local community Reconceive of ourselves as 'partners' - Tap into the 'What's in it for me' aspect of volunteering; sales pitch to business sector	
DkIT	Vision and mission are both concise and clear	Are the statements backed up by research and evidence?	Vision and mission present a clear message about the true value of volunteering. DkIT are currently in the process of developing their strategic plan and	Does the vision and mission actually represent the organisation. Must be utilised as a guiding principle in all of our work

Louth Leader Partnership	Mission and Vision are direct, to the point and feel relevant	Is the statement 'our community' too narrow?	Take ownership of volunteering at county level so all agencies come to LVC to discuss volunteering The lifecycle of volunteering means must be accessible to all Taking both of the above points together – how can we implement a joined up, interagency approach such as interconnected referrals (LES Services refer clients to us, we refer volunteers to other services)	Can someone replicate our service/do what we do?
Louth County Council Community Section	Concise, clear and understandable People will be the strength in delivering on this Vision. Both people internal to LVC	Loss or change of personnel who have established strong relationships	Possibility for more collaborative working Incoming National Volunteering Strategy and County Louth Volunteering Framework both present	Volunteers will have been lost to society as a result of the COVID crisis

	and external and the interconnected relationships The recent COVID crisis and clear demarcation of roles within the county of agencies and organisations such as LVC, LCC, Louth PPN and LLP has been a strength		opportunities for LVC Strategy Volunteerism as the oil in the engine of our communities – capitalise on this Consolidate partnerships and relationships to embed our message of what volunteering is really about New ways of volunteering: Digital neighbourhood platforms – people staying connected within their own community. In a project in Europe it was mainly ‘middle aged’ people who engaged with this volunteering, those who are likely to volunteer less in the volunteering lifecycle	Societal impacts of the crisis, cannot predict what they will be How to reconfigure engagement and reconnect with these volunteers?
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			Emphasise partner role – LVC is not just somewhere to come to if you need bodies; partner in the support and development of volunteering	
Louth Sports Partnership	Simple, clear and direct vision and mission	Ability to meet goals and needs? Resourcing? Connecting with the volunteer base.	Volunteering is lifeblood of sport Reevaluation of lifestyles by people living in our communities offering a new base of potential volunteers New funding opportunities re volunteering in sport – big emphasis on volunteer retention. Dormant accounts funding in particular	Volunteers leaving and not coming back Legislation & governance discouraging volunteers from participating (eg Child Protection, Garda Vetting) – these do not match to the traditional sport model of tentative volunteer engagement (tap on the shoulder)

			Create a resource to identify club need and match with volunteers Louth Sports Partnership co-fund development officers across all sporting codes. FAI have been told now have to operate more like GAA from a community perspective	
County Louth Library Service	Vision inherently has the potential to build a socially integrated community Mission puts continuous improvement at the centre of our work Vision is an invitation to explore volunteering	Must have a really good communications strategy	Partnership within the county a key assumption of vision and mission. Shifting to the experience of volunteering taps into people's desire to connect to others. Working on the meaning and substance of this presents an opportunity	Minding volunteer burnout Reliance on volunteers detracting from positions where staff engagement would be more sustainable? Need to manage a constant regeneration and throughput of volunteers

	Purpose underscores the vision – inherently interconnected		Library is a space that is dependent on relationships and partnerships – opportunity to build on this County Louth Volunteering Framework an opportunity to create a space for these conversations about volunteering – implementation group	
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Appendix VIII – A comparative review of strategic objectives

	Louth Volunteer Centre Strategic Objectives		National Volunteering Strategy		County Louth Volunteering Framework
SO1	Advance awareness of the benefits of volunteering	SO3	To recognise, celebrate and communicate the value and impact of volunteers and volunteering in all its forms.	SP3	Recognise, celebrate, communicate and increase awareness of the value and impact of volunteering
SO2	Advance Louth Volunteer Centre as a facilitator of volunteering				
SO3	Advance quality in volunteering	SO2	To facilitate, develop and support the Volunteering Environment so that it contributes to vibrant and sustainable communities	SP2	Facilitate, develop and support the volunteer ecosystem in Louth
SO4	Advance diversity in and access to volunteering	SO1	To increase participation and diversity in volunteering including embracing new trends and innovation	SP1 SP4	Widening participation, maintaining and diversifying the Volunteer Base Making It easier to volunteer
SO5	Advance our competence, capacity and sustainability				
		SO4	To promote ethical and skills-based overseas volunteering to deliver results for beneficiaries and to enhance Global Citizenship in Ireland.		
		SO5	To improve policy coherence on Volunteering across Government both nationally and locally	SP5	Joining the dots - improving the policy links between local and national policies and actions and advocating for volunteering