

Invitation to Tender

Feasibility Study/ Business Plan Community Early Learning and Care Facility for Castlepollard, Co Westmeath

Introduction

Westmeath County Childcare Committee CLG have been working in collaboration with Castlepollard Community Childcare Committee with the key aim of developing a public funded not for profit early learning and care facility for the Castlepollard and surrounding areas.

To date they have successfully delivered and opened a SAC under the management and guidance of Westmeath Community Development. The aim is to build on this success and open a sessional service while the planning and development is ongoing for a new public funded facility. Once in place these services would be relocated to the new facility and new models of care will also be offered if deemed sustainable.

Social Enterprise in Ireland

Social Enterprises are businesses whose core objective is to achieve a social, societal, or environmental impact. They trade on an ongoing basis in goods or services which support disadvantaged groups, or address wider societal issues such as social exclusion, food poverty, social housing, or environmental matters. Profits are reinvested to maximize the impact. This is what distinguishes social enterprises from commercial business.

By “Social Enterprise” we mean a business that, rather than maximizing profit for its owners or shareholders, is an enterprise whose primary objective is to achieve ‘profit for purpose’ and a social, economic, or environmental impact. A social enterprise pursues its objectives by trading on an ongoing basis through the provision of goods and/or services, and by reinvesting any surpluses into achieving its objectives. It is independent of the public sector and if dissolved, it should transfer its assets to another organisation with a similar mission. **National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2024-2027** Public Consultation Document

Benefits of a Community Early Learning and Care Model

Firstly, they provide early learning and care to our children who may not have access to ECCE or other care options in rural areas. This will assist employment, education and family supports in rural north Westmeath.

The community /public model will employ local people from the area. The new facility will provide a meeting point, or hub, that can often be the conduit through which a range of services are accessed for children, families and young people. Any profits they generate enable enhanced services to the communities they support. The proposed model would be a company limited by guarantee.

Active Community consultation and the closure of a local service have animated the community into action and there is strong support for this facility. The community has also accessed support to delivery Level 5/6 Early Education and Care Course in the town through the local development plan for the town. The current regeneration of Castlepollard is active and supported locally and by the statutory agencies from the County.

Castlepollard

Castlepollard is a picturesque village in north County Westmeath, situated between Lough Lene and Lough Derravaragh. The population has grown from around 1,163 in 2016 to approximately 1,349 by 2022.

- Castlepollard Mixed National School (Primary) – Enrolment about 135
- Castlepollard Parochial School (Primary, Church of Ireland) – Enrolment 25 pupils
- Castlepollard Community College (Post-Primary) – A mixed secondary school with over 330 students enrolled (approximately 172 boys and 162 girls).
Ireland StatsGov.ie+1
- Currently there is one sessional service Sundancers/ Juniper serving Castlepollard catering for 20 children
- Westmeath Community Development SAC catering for 36 Children

Committee Details

The newly established Castlepollard Community Childcare committee is a skilled based committee focused on the governance and operation of the facility. They will participate on the Tender Steering Committee. Hand in hand with this work they will be developing their own governance protocols and operating procedures.

Funding Supports

Westmeath County Childcare Committee CLG as the local delivery agent on behalf of the Department of Children, Disability and Equality have been granted funding to engage a consultant for this study. The Steering Committee will comprise members from Westmeath County Childcare Committee CLG, Castlepollard Community Childcare, Westmeath Community Development CLG, LWCYPSC/ Tusla/ PPFS and Westmeath County Council.

Overview of Study

Westmeath County Childcare Committee CLG would like to commission an individual/company to conduct a feasibility study (Part A) and business plan (Part B) to identify potential for a community/ public model in Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath. This facility would be easily accessible for the community and centrally located close to existing facilities and services.

Objectives of the Feasibility Research (Part A)

A written feasibility report will be provided addressing the following objectives:

- Provide Westmeath County Childcare Committee CLG with firm evidence of need and the potential for the development of a Social Enterprise Community Early Learning and Care Facility in Castlepollard Co Westmeath.
- Identify what type of Service Model is required.
- Identify options and analysis potential sites for Early Learning and Care Facilities
- Make recommendations as to the most appropriate and economical beneficial option
 - Identify potential costings for that option
 - Predevelopment Planning /consultants/insurance
 - Per opening - employment of manager
 - Purchase / Build Costs
 - Fit Out costs
 - Insurance Costs – Pre-Set up / Building/ operational and Directors and Officers
 - Identify sources of funding for various aspects
 - Identify risks associated with the project.
 - Estimate total costs for the establishment of recommended proposed service.

Objectives for the Business Plan (Part B)

Suggested structure of a business plan for proposed option

- 1. Executive Summary
- 2. Business Description of Service Industry Analysis And Trends Marketing Plan Financial Details Strategic Position Short Description of Service Mission, ethos, business aims and objectives Details of your competitive edge
- 3. Organisational Structure and Management Team Information Human Resources Advisors/ Professional Services Management Team Profiles Requirement, Governance Structure
- 4. Operational Plan Location Details Opening Hours Type of Service Provided
- 5. Market Research Details of Demand for your Service SWOT analysis
- 6. Marketing Plan Target Markets Market Research

- 7. Funding & Finance Income Projection Cash Flow Projection Projected Balance Sheet Base figures on realistic expectations use

Methodology

The researcher will engage secondary research methodology to gather key data/reports which will underpin and inform the feasibility study. This will include forward planning and population information in addition to CSO information and data from Castlepollard Development Committee (Overall committee charged with the development plan for the town). In addition, they will consult through short 1-1 interviews with a sample of local stakeholders to gather feedback for the proposed concept. The final aspect will be key recommendations backed up with business analysis of a proposed model.

Submissions

Submissions shall comprise:

- Proposed methodology, outlining intended approach to delivering the required elements of the study (including specific steps and timescale)
- The name, relevant experience, qualification, and proposed role of any individual to be involved in completing the feasibility study.
- The proposed service fee, providing a clear breakdown of:
 - The daily payment rate inclusive of VAT and proposed number of days required by each individual involved in undertaking the study and
 - A detailed breakdown of any additional costs
 - A current tax clearance number
 - Details of references for 2 similar projects successfully completed by the bidder.

Clarifications: If clarification is sought in relation to this tender specification, please email mmartin@westmeathchildcare.ie before 10th September 2025

Required timeline: It is expected the research will be completed by 30th December 2025

Budget: €19,000

Timeframe: 8 weeks

October – Dec 2025 (To be agreed by both parties)

Evaluation Criteria 100 Marks

Understanding of tender brief, relevant experience, and ability to meet required deadline.	Methodology	Capacity and resources	Value for Money
25% of marks	25% of marks	25% of marks	25% of marks

APPLICATION PROCESS

All tenders are to be submitted by email

to: mmartin@westmeathchildcare.ie

subject box to be marked

Invitation to Tender Feasibility Study/ Business Plan

Please retain a delivery and read receipt

Closing Date: 12th September 2025 at 12.00pm

Interview Friday 19th September 2025 via TEAMS



An Roinn Leanaí, Michumais
agus Comhionannais
Department of Children,
Disability and Equality

