



Next2Met Policy Learning Event

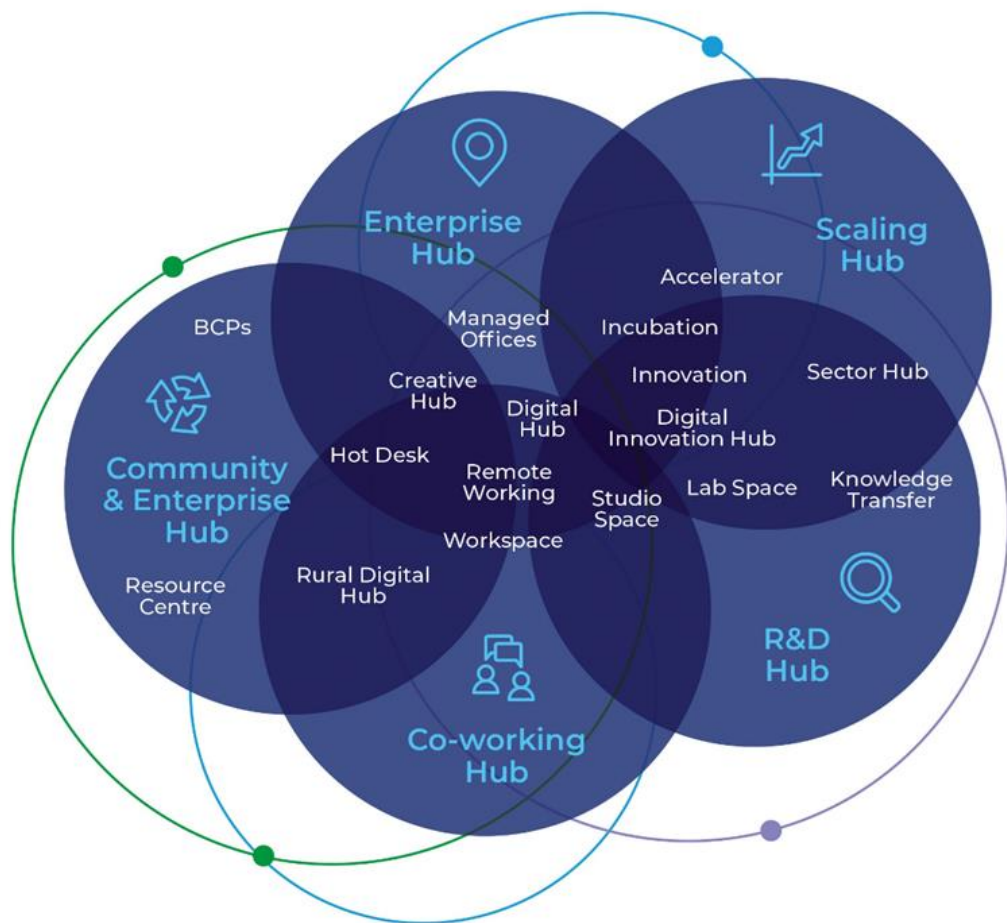
Strategy and Guidance for Developing Rural Working Hubs


Rural Working Hubs


- Co-operation Project with Leader Aisapari, Finland
- Aims:
 - Develop a strategic vision for the development of rural working hubs
 - Develop supports for organisations seeking to develop hubs.


What are Rural Working Hubs


- Typically co-working spaces developed within a town or village centre to create new opportunities for people to work within their local area, on an ad hoc, part time or full time basis.
- Important role in rural regeneration
- Covid-19 has accelerated change toward remote working




- 1**  **Enterprise Hub**
Local enterprise driver providing space, facilities and services for start-up, HPSUs, remote workers. Hosting events and acting as a connector for entrepreneur networks.

- 2**  **Scaling Hub**
A step up from a general enterprise hub with strong focus on post start-up clients being supported through scaling and investment stages. High level services for acceleration and export development. Global entrepreneurship events and programmes.

- 3**  **Research and Development Hub**
Specialist Hub usually attached to HEI with focus on clients in early stages of Research and Development of new products and services. Provides office or desk space and access to meeting rooms, laboratories etc. A full-time manager and other staff are employed to support business development through incubation and acceleration.

- 4**  **Co-working Hub**
Provides clients with private offices or desks with access to meeting rooms and event space. Offers clients plug & play facilities but not business support. Often co-located with other facilities and shared management.

- 5**  **Community & Enterprise Hub**
A centre whose primary focus is to provide community services and has office space, dedicated and/or hot desks as well as meeting rooms available to clients. The business facilities will complement the community services and provide an income for the community. These hubs can be run by full-time managers, Community Employment staff and in some cases by volunteers. Some of these hubs drive innovative projects in the areas of sustainability and digitisation in their locale.

Policy Context

- Making Remote Work
- Our Rural Future Plan – Public Sector set to have 20% working remotely
- Western Development Commission – Atlantic Economic Corridor Enterprise Hubs Project
- Grow Remote

Longford County Council Strategy for Rural Working Hubs

- **Policy Objective 1:** A Town Centre First approach will be adopted in all rural working hub proposals
- **Policy Objective 2:** Longford County Council proposes a tiered approach to rural working hub development, as outlined in the strategy and organisations will be required to undertake a business plan to demonstrate the demand for a rural working hub in a specific area
- **Policy Objective 3:** An internal working group will be established to assess proposals for rural working hubs submitted to Longford County Council for funding support.

Longford County Council Strategy for Rural Working Hubs

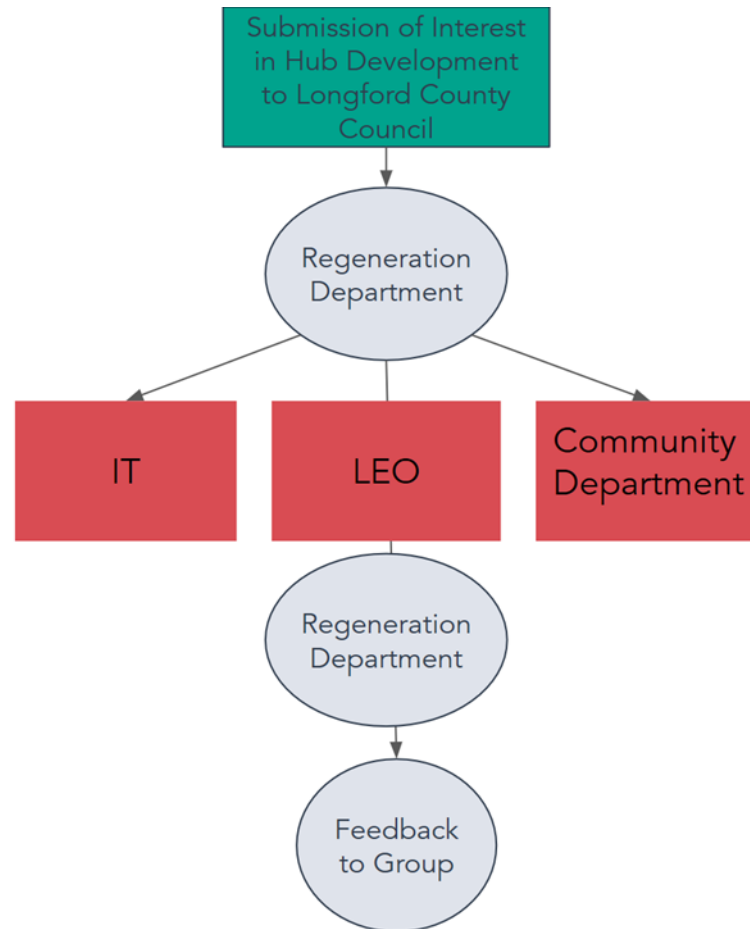
Tiered approach:

- 2/3 Enterprise Hubs
- Community and Enterprise Hubs – self-sustaining towns/towns and villages
- BCP
- Private Sector

RURAL WORKING HUBS LONGFORD



Longford County Council Strategy for Rural Working Hubs



Guidance Document for Development of Rural Working Hubs

- **WHY**
- **Business Plan**
- **Availability of sufficient broadband connection**
- **Resources**
 - **Human Resources**
 - **Financial Resources – initial set up and ongoing management/maintenance**
- **Booking Systems**
- **Facilities**
- **Management Models**
- **Branding and Marketing**
- **Innovation**
- **Sustainability**

Challenges in Establishing Rural Working Hubs

- Convincing funders and other relevant stakeholders about the added value of a digital hub in a particular rural area.
- Ensuring the awareness and visibility of the hub to potential users.
- Sustainability of hub
- Insurance of a hub
- Who pays for a hub space – employer or employee

Lessons and Recommendations on the development of Remote Working Hubs

- May be need to utilise multiple funding sources
- Rural digital hubs are not 'one-size-fits-all'
- Rural community in which hub is located also needs to be ready
- Feasibility study will support business case
- Strong committed leaders and community engagement from the start is crucial
- Need to develop community around hub and market and promote hub

Thank You

Contact: loconnor@longfordcoco.ie