



Comhairle Contae Lú
Louth County Council

Cruinniú Ceantar Buirge Dhroichead Átha - Borough District of Drogheda Meeting

Minutes of the Borough District of Drogheda Meeting held at Civic Offices, Fair Street, Drogheda
Monday, 13th May 2024 at 4:15pm

In attendance:

Cathaoirleach: Deputy Mayor Cllr Kevin Callan

Members: Councillor(s) James Byrne, Joanna Byrne, Tom Cunningham, Emma Cutlip, Michelle Hall, Paddy McQuillan, Declan Power, Pio Smith

Apologies: Councillor(s) Eileen Tully (Mayor)

Officials: Joe McGuinness, Director of Services
Gráinne Tuomey, Meetings Administrator
Mark Johnson, Senior Engineer
Declan Grimes, Senior Engineer
Keith McArdle, Assistant Engineer

Minute No. 49/24

Standing order no. 50 – Meet in Committee to agree Mayoral Award Recipients

In line with Standing Order no. 50, whereby a two-third vote is required to meet in committee, Members confirmed agreement to meet in committee to agree proposed Mayoral Award recipients as follows:

Councillor Voting	For	Against	Abstain	Absent
James Byrne	1			
Joanna Byrne	1			
Kevin Callan	1			
Tom Cunningham	1			
Emma Cutlip	1			
Michelle Hall	1			
Paddy McQuillan	1			
Declan Power	1			
Pio Smith	1			
Eileen Tully				1
Totals	9	0	0	1

The Deputy Mayor advised that the awards would be held on the 27th May in the Highlanes Gallery and that the Members would meet in committee the Notices of Motions on the agenda.

Minute No. 50/24

Minutes of Online Meeting held on Monday 8th April 2024

The minutes of the monthly meeting held online on Monday 8th April 2024 were confirmed on the

Proposal of Cllr Pio Smith

Seconded by Cllr Michelle Hall

And approved.

Minute No. 51/24

Matters Arising

None

Minute No. 52/24

Date of final meeting of Borough District 2019 – 2024 term

It was agreed by all 9 Members present that as the scheduled June meeting fell after the local elections, that although Members were technically still elected until 7 days after the elections that it would not be seemly to have a meeting following the local elections. It was therefore agreed by all that this was the last Municipal District Meeting.

The Deputy Mayor extended thanks to his colleagues for working together over the term for the betterment of Drogheda, and acknowledged the support of the media present, and the staff and executive of Louth County Council.

Director of services, Joe McGuinness speaking on behalf of the chief executive wished all the members well in the upcoming local elections and thank them for their service during the term.

Councillor Joanna Byrne acknowledged the contribution of the Mayor Councillor Eileen Tully, especially while she was unwell and wished her well. This sentiment was echoed by other members present.

Minute No. 53/24

Allocation of Members Community Grants provided for under Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2001

Members considered the Community Grants as presented to them, and approval was

Proposed by: Cllr Joanna Byrne

Seconded by: Cllr James Byrne

And agreed by Members.

As it was the last Borough District meeting it was

Proposed by Cllr Pio Smith

Seconded by Cllr Tom Cunningham

And agreed by all present that any amendments or outstanding allocations would be pre-approved up to and including Tuesday the 21st of May.

Minute No. 54/24

Litter Management Plan

Members considered the plan as set out on the agenda before them. Claire Hughes Senior Executive Engineer presented members with an overview of the plan which was drawn up in accordance with the Litter Pollution Act 1997. The plan which covers the period of 2024 to 2026 is specifically for the Drogheda Borough District and a plan has been before each municipal district.

Members were advised of the purpose of the plan, the main objectives of the plan, and given a breakdown on the number of staff involved in litter enforcement and administration. Members were told of 6 litter wardens, 6,500 litter complaints investigated between 2020 and 2023, 1600 fixed penalty notices, and five and a half thousand tonnes of waste collected from public bins.

Councillor Michelle Hall expressed disappointment with the plan and pinpointed a number of areas which she considered lacking, advising that she could not adopt the plan as set out before them.

Cllr James Byrne raised a number of queries about staffing levels, fixed penalty notices and CCTV.

Councillor Pio Smith Suggested national changes in legislation were required to deal with dog litter. He further advised that he drove the town every morning at 8:15am and it was very clean having been cleaned overnight by staff. He suggested that if any funds could be found they might be utilised to pay for overtime at weekends and evenings for additional street cleaning. Councillor Smith suggested that an "adopt a street" scheme could be utilized to incentivize residents to take pride in their area.

Cllr Emma Cutlip commended Cllr Hall on issues raised and agreed she also thought the plan was not ready to be passed. She suggested that discussions on litter that were held in the chamber should be in the plan and focused on bins and the process for bin replacement. She also suggested speak greater definition in the plan of illegal dumping versus placement of domestic waste in public bins.

The Director of Services Joe McGuinness suggested that any issues with the Plan be submitted in writing for consideration and a review of the draft plan will be undertaken. Should the plan require significant changes this would mean that the draft plan would have to go back out on public display and the process recommence.

Members were strongly advised that the placement of domestic waste in public litter bins is an offense which will continued to be enforced.

Minute No. 55/24

Ballymakenny East Social Housing PPP Part 8

Members noted the report as circulated at the meeting. Declan Grimes, Senior Engineer advised that this was a continuation of the Ballymakenny West Scheme, and Rachel Hamilton, Senior Executive Architect gave members an overview of the scheme.

Members were advised that the scheme would be comprised of 130 units and a creche which are being built under a public private partnership agreement.

The Members, while welcoming the scheme suggested a need for traffic calming around the area due to the increase in construction of properties affecting existing residents and were advised of upcoming Active Travel schemes to alleviate traffic. Members were also advised of a traffic impact

assessment which was required to be carried out by the consultants but that the housing team would further engage with infrastructure staff on traffic calming.

Member questions were raised on creche capacity, UD breakdown, cycle parking and EV charging capacity within the scheme all of which were clarified by Staff.

Ger Murphy Director of Services thanked the Members for their input.

Minute No. 56/24

Housing Progress Report

Members noted the report as circulated at the meeting. Declan Grimes, Senior Engineer, and Ger Murphy Director of Services addressed all matters raised by the Members.

The following items were highlighted:

- The figure of 31 Vacant Properties in Drogheda area refers to Social Units, properties become vacant due to several reasons, fire damage, tenants going to nursing homes, tenants vacating, death of tenant etc. The age of properties can affect time to return to standard
- An upcoming Vacant Homes Officer position within Louth County Council will deal with private vacant properties, this post will be under Town Centre Regeneration reporting to Terry Hamilton
- Currently the processing of the Croi Conaithe scheme which can grant funding for regeneration of private properties over 2 years vacant sits with Housing, but this may move to Town regeneration also in future.
- Residential opposition was suggested on build of Apartments in Rathmullen, due to removal of green area – and were advised that the statutory period for submissions is open now under the Part 8 process
- Cllr Hall appealed for housing to contact the Department about Clogherhead to make it a Rent Pressure Zone but was advised that the priority for housing is to address social housing

Minute No. 57/24

Roads and Local Services Report

Members discussed the report as circulated at the meeting.

Along with numerous requests for road surfacing, footpath repair, traffic calming, increased bin emptying, traffic light resequencing, vegetation cut back on roadside, road signage requests clean and repair, and Disabled parking bays and yellow line and yellow box requests, the following items were highlighted:

Members spoke at length and expressed their disquiet about many issues. The volume of litter, potholes and the standard of grass cutting in the Drogheda Borough area was highlighted, with suggestions made that the Council were not doing anything to tackle issues. The Executive was advised that items are being raised at the doorsteps when campaigning for the upcoming local elections and are difficult to justify.

Mark Johnston Senior Engineer spoke of 330 potholes having been filled since the last monthly meeting in Drogheda alone, with circa 1000 addressed throughout the county within the last month. Members were again reminded of recent inclement weather causing damage to roads and that March was the wettest on record.

Mark further advised Members that there are 6 machines endlessly sweeping the Drogheda area for litter, with 16/17 staff working in shifts non-stop to try and address litter issues, with €1.3m having been spent on tackling litter in the Drogheda area annually.

With regards to grass cutting, and complaints on same; Members were advised that the contractor for this is sourced through the OGP framework; two lots were available to Louth on the framework, LOT 1 included cutting and mulching, and LOT 2 included cutting and collecting. There was over a €100k difference between lots, not including the required disposal cost of collected grass thereafter, so LOT 1 was chosen. Members were reminded that some areas of lands remain waterlogged causing difficulty in cutting, and this has resulted in damage to some lands due to the weight of the large vehicles needed to cut the lands. The Contractor is being requested to change tyres to limit this damage, but as grass is still wet clumping of cut grass occurs.

Following on from more complaints raised on grass cutting, Joe McGuinness advised that he would bring this back to the Senior Management Team for discussion.

All other items were addressed and/or noted by Mark Johnston.

Minute No. 58/24

Suspension of Standing Order no. 5 to allow all the business of the meeting to be heard

During the agenda item on Roads and Local Services, as the meeting time was approaching 18.15hrs, the Deputy-Mayor Kevin Callan suggested that standing orders be suspended to allow all items to be heard. On questioning no member raised an objection, members present were:

Councillor Voting	For	Against	Abstain	Absent
James Byrne	1			
Joanna Byrne	1			
Kevin Callan	1			
Tom Cunningham	1			
Emma Cutlip	1			
Michelle Hall	1			
Paddy McQuillan	1			
Declan Power	1			
Pio Smith	1			
Eileen Tully				1
Totals	9	0	0	1

Minute No. 59/24

Notice of Motion: Cllr Tom Cunningham

Seconded by: Cllr Kevin Callan

That Louth County Council make a one-way traffic flow system at Aston Green, the road at the shops in Aston Village.

Reply from D. Jones Director of Services, Place Making & Physical Development

Any changes in road layout should be informed by the existence of significant accident history and a need to improve road safety. The Roads & Local Services team are not aware of any significant accident history at this location that would warrant a review of the current road layout. The current

two-way system has the effect of slowing traffic speeds given the availability of only half the width of the road and the need to be cognisant of oncoming traffic. The creation of a one-way system has the risk of increased traffic speeds, thereby increasing the likelihood of serious injury in the event of a collision. Accordingly, Louth County Council are not proposing to alter the existing road layout at this time.

Members noted the response to the Motion from the Executive with Cllr Cunningham advising that he was very disappointed with the reply, claiming that due to the layout of parking at the shops which required vehicles to reverse out blindly, and use of the area by buses as a roundabout so cars have to reverse out of their way, there was currently a serious amount of accidents that are not being reported. Cllr Cunningham thought that making the area a one-way system would be a cheap effective safety measure which would prevent accidents.

This motion was supported by many members who concurred with Cllr Cunningham.

Minute No. 60/24

Notice of Motion: Cllr Michelle Hall
Seconded by: Cllr Kevin Callan

That this council will action a roadworks upgrade plan for Leonard's Cross, Mell to mitigate for the additional traffic at this junction due to new housing developments, noting that Condition 33 of An Bord Pleanala approved Strategic Housing Development, previously known as Old Slane Road SHD, now Gort Meala (Mell) provides that the developer should pay €250,000 for an upgrade of Leonard's Cross to Louth County Council.

Reply from D. Jones, Director of Services, Place Making and Physical Development

Louth County Council's Active Travel Section have received funding of €100K from the National Transport Authority (NTA) on the 7th February 2024 to advance a scheme which will provide segregated cycle paths and footpaths of 2.1km in length along the route of the R168 from its junction with the Old Slane Rd (Leonard's Cross), northwards to the Hill of Rath Roundabout and then eastwards along the R166 towards Rosehall roundabout. Thereafter this proposed scheme incorporating cycle path and upgraded footpaths will connect into another proposed Active Travel Scheme on the R132, North Rd, which will then travel south and connect into the Westgate Project at the Bridge of Peace.

As part of the design process of this Active Travel Scheme, our Design Consultants will be incorporating an upgraded junction of Leonard's Cross, including Old Slane Rd, minor junction upgrades at Cement Rd and the R168 (Mell Rd / Waterunder) junctions.

The type of junction proposed is currently at option development stage and our appointed Design Team RPS Group will continue to develop the design of this junction, with a view to ultimately progressing to planning and construction.

Members noted the response to the Motion from the Executive with Cllr Hall advising that the crux of the motion had not been addressed i.e. that money had been given to the Council for an upgrade to the junction but it had not been spent on the junction. Cllr Hall suggested that the Council were not in compliance with an instruction from the Bord, and wanted to know where the money was.

Mark Johnston advised that speed cushions which had been installed were shown to be equally effective safety measures, and better for emergency services access.

Minute No. 61/24

Notice of Motion: Cllr Michelle Hall

Seconded by: Cllr Kevin Callan

That Louth Council will provide a plan for new pedestrian crossings across Drogheda Borough District to improve road safety for pedestrians and encourage more active travel in Drogheda BD for people of all ages and abilities, helping us meet our Healthy Louth targets. Officially designated controlled and uncontrolled crossings should be instated at all pedestrian desire lines, including:

- a). at junctions which are prone to have heavy traffic (even if only at certain times of the day);*
- b). at points where pedestrians would reasonably be expected to be able to cross and there is no alternative (either at all or close by);*
- c). where roads need to be crossed to access particular public areas (e.g., shopping centres, libraries, parks, etc.).*

Reply from D. Jones, Director of Services, Place Making and Physical Development

Over the period of 2022 – 2023, Louth County Council's Active Travel Section have received funding of €120,000 from the National Transport Authority (NTA) to undertake minor upgrades to improve pedestrian crossings at a number of junctions across Drogheda Borough District and has again received €50,000 in 2024 to continue this type of works, carried out through the Roads & Local Services team.

In addition, as part of Drogheda Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA), this study will examine and identify at a high level any gaps in pedestrian infrastructure such as new permeability links and pedestrian desire lines.

For each of the proposed new Active Travel routes within Drogheda Borough District and other Districts (summary of Active Travel Projects are tabulated in the Chief Executive's Monthly Management Report), the design process will examine all junctions, pedestrian desire lines and incorporate adequate pedestrian and cycle crossings into the final design options.

Members noted the response to the Motion from the Executive with Cllr Hall advising that she was not happy with the response given. While she understood there was no money, she considered that Louth County Council should have a plan of where crossings were needed and use forward thinking so they can tick items of list when funding becomes available.

Minute No. 62/24

Notice of Motion: Cllr Pio Smith

Seconded by: Cllr Kevin Callan

'Asking that the Local Authority secure funding for an annual Drogheda Summer Festival. This was originally proposed after the successful Fleadh Cheoil events and unfortunately the COVID pandemic didn't allow for an outdoor summer festival to happen. The town needs a boost, particularly after the loss of the D Hotel and a summer/early autumn festival would keep Drogheda on the tourist destination map'

Reply from T. McEvoy, Director of Services, Strategic Economic Development

Drogheda Festival Committee is organising a Mid-Summer festival taking place from the 21st to 23rd of June. They applied for and were granted funding under the 'Regional Festivals & Participative Events Programme 2024'. The Drogheda Tourism Cluster which is a committee comprising of Fáilte Ireland, the Hospitality sector, Drogheda Chamber, Drogheda BIDs, Droichead Arts and Louth County Council's Tourism Officer and Night-time Economy Advisor are working with

the festival committee to ensure full wraparound events. In light of recent events in Drogheda this festival will provide a boost to the town and therefore it is proposed to provide additional support to the festival."

Members noted the response to the Motion from the Executive with Cllr Smith suggesting that the town of Drogheda needs a lift with the closing of the D Hotel and the motion was to assist market Drogheda as a tourist destination. He hoped the last line of the Director's response was a commitment to funding and considered that we could build on a 3 day festival. Cllr Smith acknowledged the council's contribution to the Lú festival.

Minute No. 63/24

Notice of Question: Cllr Paddy McQuillan

Members noted the response to the Notice of Question as it appeared on the agenda before them and as raised by Cllr McQuillan


Minute No. 64/24

Approval of Mayoral Award Recipients in Committee

Members approved recipients for Mayoral Awards in committee, confirmed the date of 27th May for the awards and agreed to forward full contact details to the Corporate Services section without delay.

As there was no other business the meeting concluded.

The Minutes were confirmed at a meeting of the Borough District held on:

Date: 1ST July 2024
Mayor: 
Meeting Administrator: 