



Comhairle Contae Lú  
Louth County Council

## LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL - CORPORATE POLICY GROUP

Minutes of the Corporate Policy Group Meeting held in the Setanta Meeting Room, County Hall, on Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at 9:30am

### In attendance:

**Cathaoirleach, Cllr:** Seán Kelly

**Members, Cllrs:** Rachel Kerley  
Robert Nash  
Kevin Meenan  
Pio Smith

**Officials:** Thomas McEvoy, Deputy Chief Executive  
Joanna Kelly, Acting Director of Services  
Ger Murphy, Director of Services  
Bernie Woods, Director of Services  
Sinéad Dooley, Meeting Administrator

**Apologies:** David Conway, Chief Executive  
David Jones, Director of Services  
David Hanratty, Acting Director of Services

### 1. Minutes of Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2025

The minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> September were confirmed on the:-

**Proposal of** Cllr. Rachel Kerley  
**Seconded by** Cllr. Kevin Meenan  
And approved

### 2. Council Meeting Agenda

Acting Director of Services, Joanna Kelly, presented the October Council Meeting Agenda to the Members and highlighted specific matters for discussion and decision, including:

- Chief Executive's Report to proposed Variation No.3 of the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 – Deputy Chief Executive Thomas McEvoy advised that the Chief Executive's Report—prepared in accordance with Section 13(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)—was circulated to Members on Monday, 22nd September. Members are required to complete their consideration of the proposed variation within six weeks of receiving the report, i.e., by 2nd November.

They must resolve either to adopt the variation to the Development Plan, with or without the recommended modifications, or to refuse it. Should any material alterations be proposed, a further public display period of four weeks will be required.

- Draft Housing Allocation Scheme – Director of Services, Ger Murphy, advised that a revised Housing Allocation Scheme has been prepared under Section 22 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 and associated regulations. The scheme, last updated in 2016, outlines priorities and procedures for allocating dwellings, including proportional allocation and a mechanism for ‘Rightsizing’. It has been endorsed by the Social Development SPC and will be presented to Council for consideration as a Reserved Function.2026.
- Public Art Policy 2025-2030 – Director of Services, Ger Murphy, advised that a Public Art Policy has been prepared to provide a framework for the management and development of public art in Louth. The policy aims to formalise systems and structures while supporting programming and commissioning opportunities. It is designed to positively impact the county and its citizens, and to offer artists—both established and emerging—opportunities to create new work with the Council. The policy, which reflects best practice and builds on previous successes, has been considered and noted by the Social Development SPC and will be brought to Council for approval.
- Nuclear Free Local Authorities Membership – Acting Director of Services, Joanna Kelly, advised that, following further investigations, regular mailouts and invitation to quarterly meetings are sent to Cllr Marianne Butler as the County Council’s notified representative to the NFLA Steering Committee. She further advised that it is open to any Member to be designated affiliate for the purposes of receiving correspondence and initiatives. Information has been made available regarding the benefits of being a member and Council will be asked to consider whether membership in the organisation should continue.

### **3. Members Allocations**

Noted

### **4. To consider and recommend conferences and events**

The list of conferences and events was noted with the AEBR Conference 2025 Gorizia added for appropriate consideration.

### **5. Request from Drogheda Port Company for briefing to Members**

It was noted that Drogheda Port Company has requested a briefing session with Members. It was agreed that the matter be brought before Council for consideration and resolution, in accordance with the provisions of Section 23 of the Harbours Act 2015.

### **6. Budget Update**

Director of Services, Bernie Woods, advised that details of grant allocations for the coming year are expected within the next week or two. Road funding is typically confirmed by the Department in February, based on previous years experiences. Ms Woods confirmed that the Borough District of Drogheda and the Municipal District of Ardee have held their budgetary plan meetings and accepted a €100,000 allocation for their General Municipal

Allocation for 2026. She further indicated that Drogheda has retained its pay-parking and sports centre charges. The same proposal will be presented to the Municipal District of Dundalk on 14<sup>th</sup> October.

## **7. Planning Matters**

Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Services, Thomas McEvoy, advised that, notwithstanding the challenges arising from the Planning and Development Act 2024 not yet being enacted, preparations for the new County Development Plan 2027–2033 have commenced. He advised that as there is currently no legislative provision to suspend or extend the existing timelines, proceeding with the development of the plan is necessary to mitigate the risk of judicial review.

## **8. Members Reps**

New CRM - Acting Director of Services, Joanna Kelly confirmed that the pilot of Phase One of the new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, with a particular focus on the Councillor Portal and Operations had launched and that feedback received so far was positive. She further advised that training remained available for any Member that may wish to avail of it.

Councillor Kelly advised that he had written to Members seeking their feedback on the new CRM system. He also noted, as previously discussed, that concerns remain regarding the closure of queries raised by Members and the quality of information/responses received via the existing Sugar CRM.

Councillor Kelly further raised concerns regarding communications during weather warnings, with specific reference to recent Storm Amy, and requested that the Corporate Policy Group consider how best to address the matter going forward. While response works were undertaken throughout the course of Storm Amy, Members expressed dissatisfaction with receiving limited or generic updates. A proposal was made for the establishment of a 'WhatsApp Group' facility to enable Members to directly notify on-call Overseers and Outdoor crews of issues and to receive timely status updates on actions taken.

Deputy Chief Executive, Thomas McEvoy, committed to reviewing options for improved communication processes. However, he advised that the provision of instructions to staff remains an Executive Function, and it would not be appropriate for Members to assign tasks directly to staff via a 'WhatsApp Group' or any other channel.

Acting Director of Services, Joanna Kelly, reminded Members of the existing 'WhatsApp Channel' established for their benefit, which provided regular updates during Storm Amy on issues being addressed by outdoor crews.

The matter will be considered further at the next meeting of CPG.

## **9. SPC Work Programme**

Councillor Kerley advised that the work programme for the Planning Strategic Policy Committee will be finalised at its next meeting.

## 10. Tourism Strategy Update

Deputy Chief Executive, Thomas McEvoy advised that a draft Tourism Strategy has been prepared by the Strategic Policy Committee for Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning, and is expected to be finalised by November.

## 11. Cyber Security Training

Director of Services, Bernie Woods, informed Members that Meta compliance training is now prepared for rollout to Members and completion of same will be mandatory.

## 12. Rate Waiver Scheme Update for previously Vacant Commercial Properties

Members were advised that, as in 2024, the Strategic Policy Committee for Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning reviews the implications of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019 and the Waiver of Rates Regulations 2024. Recommendations arising from this review will be brought before the full Council at the budget meeting scheduled for 17th November.

## 13. Any other Business

Acting Director of Services, Joanna Kelly, confirmed that an internal policy is in place and applied in instances involving the death of an employee. Councillor Kelly queried whether a corresponding policy should be developed from the perspective of Elected Members. Ms Kelly undertook to consider the appropriateness of such a policy, taking into account the potential sensitivities and complexities involved.

The Minutes were confirmed at a meeting of the Corporate Policy Group held on:

Date:

6th Nov '25

Cathaoirleach:

KA

Meetings Administrator:

Sinead Doherty