

## **Louth County Council**

**Minutes of Social Development Strategic Policy Committee meeting held in the Magdalene Room, Civic Offices, Drogheda on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 3.00pm**

**Present:** Cllr. Kevin Meenan (Chair)

Cllr. Jim Tenanty  
Cllr. Eric Donovan  
Cllr. Maeve Yore  
Barbara Rajska  
Damien McKenna  
Grainne Murphy

**Officials:** Ger Murphy, Director of Services  
Declan Grimes, Senior Engineer  
Amanda Branigan, A/County Librarian  
Moya Hodggers, A/Arts Officer  
Catherine Treanor, Assistant Staff Officer

**Apologies:** Cllr. Anne-Marie Ford  
Monica Murphy  
Colm O'Hanrahan  
Amina Ndoye  
John Lawrence  
Brona O'Reilly

### **Confirmation of Minutes of SPC Meeting held on 10th December 2024**

A hard copy of the minutes of the previous meeting was circulated. On the proposal of Cllr. Yore, and seconded by Cllr. Meenan, the minutes of 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024 were approved.

### **Update on Housing Delivery Programme**

Declan Grimes, Senior Engineer delivered a detailed presentation on the Housing Capital Delivery programme which includes both social and affordable housing delivery. He highlighted delivery to date under the programme and future targets.

The various methods of delivery were highlighted including LA builds, Turnkey and Part V acquisitions and delivery in partnership with AHB's. It was outlined that LCC is projecting the delivery of over 500 units above social housing delivery targets, and that the Housing Section will continue to build on this progress where possible. Specific mention was given to LA direct

build sites including Mount Avenue, Dundalk and Boice Court Phase 2, Drogheda as well as recent progress in commencing four Accelerated Delivery Programme sites to construction stage (Louth Village, Ravel – Dunleer, Ballymakenny West and Greenhills, Drogheda). Mention was given to the Point Road, Dundalk scheme which was approved by An Bord Pleanála in December 2024 but is now subject to Judicial Review.

Progress in relation to securing Affordable Housing schemes was discussed including Ballymakenny Park and Seven Winds, Drogheda with more potential schemes under consideration.

It was noted that 30% of all units to be delivered are universally designed for people with disabilities and that the Traveler Accommodation Programme is currently delivered two group housing schemes in Dundalk.

The chair thanked Declan for the comprehensive presentation and committee members raised a number of questions regarding the programme to which the housing team responded,

### **Presentation on Cultural Services**

Amanda Branigan A/County Librarian provided an overview of the Cultural Services remit which includes the Library Service, Arts Services, Archives Service and County Museum. It was noted that the Library Service's mission statement is strengthening and supporting communities in Louth by providing dynamic, inclusive and responsive library services. The trajectory for LLS is governed by both the LLS Development Programme 2020-2025 and the National Public Library Strategy *The Library is the Place*; 2023-2027.

Amanda highlighted the *Right to Read Programme* which focuses on reading from the earliest stages and the promotion of literacy, media, digital & health literacy. LLS has a far-reaching events and outreach programme which ties into national strategic initiatives including *Healthy Ireland at Your Library* and *Right to Read*.

Recent achievements are the two *My Open Library* services in Ardee & Drogheda. This allows for enhanced opening hours from 8am-10pm 7 days a week, 365 days per year and has been a wonderful success. Opening hours have been increased in Dundalk, Drogheda & Dunleer with equity of access for all. Amanda advised that Co. Louth was the 1<sup>st</sup> library authority in the country to achieve *Library of Sanctuary* status which recognizes the good practice taking place in LLS and the contribution the library makes to build a community of welcome and sanctuary across the county.

Key objectives for 2025 include progressing the capital redevelopment of Dominican Church in Drogheda into a *statement library* fitting of the population and need of the community and the procurement of a new 'Library in the Community' mobile vehicle allowing the library to reach all parts of the county.

Amanda highlighted the Archives Services under the management of Archivist Lorraine Mc Cann. Her remit includes management, preservation and provision of access to archives. Collections consist of local authority & local archives. Approx. 300,000 individual items dating back to 1628.

Lastly Amanda showcased the work of the County Museum, Dundalk, which has a collection of 80,000 items which tell the story of Louth's development over the past 5,000 years. It is a designated museum, one of only a number in the country which can display items from the national collection.

Moya Rodgers, A/Arts Officer & Creative Ireland Co-Ordinator outlined the services of both the Arts Service and Creative Ireland Programme. Moya highlighted the Louth Arts Development Plan 2022-2027 and the main objectives/goals in relation to funding opportunities, providing grants to artists and art organisations. Key strategic objectives for 2025 include a new Public Art Policy (Percent for Art) to streamline public art acquisitions in line with new national policy. The second objective is to progress the Artist Workspace Capital Project, subject to approval. Moya highlighted the Creative Ireland programme under which services include community grants, tailored projects targeting communities most in need, and engagement through LCC Cultural team.

Cllr. Meenan thanked both Amanda & Moya for their presentations. Both he and the committee members raised a number of questions and observations regarding Cultural Services.

Cllr. Meenan thanked the team for the presentations. The Director of Services then advised members of the purpose of the presentations i.e. to provide a background on services to assist them with informing local level policy. He advised that the committee could focus on two main areas of local level policy i.e. revised Allocation Scheme and Public Art Policy. In this regard the executive is aiming to bring one or both policies in draft form to the next meeting of the committee.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the committee would take place at the County Archives.

Cllr. Meenan concluded the meeting by thanking all in attendance.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Minutes confirmed on:

Date: 17 - 06 - 25  
Signed: Kevin Meenan

Cllr. Kevin Meenan (Chair)

