

Council Meeting 18th October 2021

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting hosted in St. Gerard's Hall, Dundalk and held remotely over MS Teams.

In attendance:

Presiding:

Councillor, James Byrne, Leas Cathaoirleach

Members:

(R) signifies remote attendance.

Councillors: Marianne Butler, Paula Butterly (R), James Byrne, Joanna Byrne, Kevin Callan, Emma Coffey, Bernie Conlon, Maria Doyle, Michelle Hall (R), Conor Keelan, Sean Kelly (R), Fiachra Mac Raghnaill (R), Pearse McGeough, Paddy McQuillan, Kevin Meenan, Declan Power, John Reilly, Liam Reilly, Tomás Sharkey, John Sheridan, Jim Tenanty, Eileen Tully, Antoin Watters, Maeve Yore

Apologies:

Councillors: Edel Corrigan, Tom Cunningham, Andrea McKeivitt, Dolores Minogue, Pio Smith.

Officials:

Present;

Chief Executive - Joan Martin,

Directors of Services – Joe McGuinness, Paddy Donnelly, Catherine Duff, & Colette Moss (Acting for Frank Pentony)

Head of Finance – Bernie Woods,

Head of IT – Helen Divilly,

Meetings Administrator – Gráinne Tuomey.

Minute No. 166/21

Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting on Monday **20th September 2021** were Proposed by Cllr. Liam Reilly, Seconded by Cllr. Joanna Byrne and adopted.

Minutes of the Adjourned September Monthly Meeting to deal solely with the Chief Executives Report on proposed Material Amendments to the Draft County Development Plan held on **23rd September 2021** were proposed by Cllr. Liam Reilly, Seconded by Cllr. Kevin Callan and adopted.

Minutes of the Adjourned September Monthly Meeting to deal solely with the Chief Executives Report on proposed Material Amendments to the Draft County Development Plan held on **28th September 2021** were proposed by Cllr. Emma Coffey, Seconded by Cllr. Jim Tenanty and adopted.

Minutes of the Adjourned September Monthly Meeting to deal solely with the Chief Executives Report on proposed Material Amendments to the Draft County Development Plan

held on **30th September 2021** were proposed by Cllr. Liam Reilly, Seconded by Cllr. John Sheridan and adopted.

Minute No. 167/21

Minutes of Municipal District Meetings - Noted

The following Minutes were noted by Members:

Municipal District of Ardee Monthly Meeting held on 2nd September 2021

Borough District of Drogheda Monthly Meeting held on 6th September 2021

Municipal District of Dundalk Monthly Meeting held on 7th September 2021

Minute No. 168/21

Minutes of Committee Meetings - Noted

The following Minutes were noted by Members:

Corporate Policy Group 8th September 2021

Minute No. 169/21

Report from Chairperson of Corporate Policy Group

Cllr Jim Tenanty who had chaired the last meeting in the absence of the Cathaoirleach and Leas Cathaoirleach informed the members that the meeting of the CPG was held in the Council chamber, at 9.00 am on Wednesday 6th September. Items discussed included:

- Progress on the adopted County Development Plan
- Meeting formats and possible resumption of meetings in Council Chamber
- Overview of the Council Meeting Agenda including agreeing to a briefing on MapAlerter, SPC attendance issues, nominees for LCDC.
- Attendance at SPCs

Members queried the advertising for a designer on Chains and a brief discussion took place around this, where, it was suggested that any new chains should be modelled on the Drogheda Mayor Chains which have the names inscribed on the inside.

Minute No. 170/21

Strategic Policy Committee Chairpersons Report

There was no SPC report but the issue of attendance and maintaining a quorum was discussed.

Minute No. 171/21

**Breithniú ar Thuarascálacha agus ar Chomhréitigh ón bPríomhfheidhmeannach /
Consideration of Reports and Recommendations from Chief Executive**

- Monthly Management Report
- Finance & Water Services
- Economic Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure
- Operations & Waste Management
- Corporate & Emergency Services
- Housing & Quality of Life

Members discussed the report as issued and the following items were highlighted:

Finance & Water Services

- Lack of mains water supply in Kilcurry – If Irish Water will not extend mains, residents should consider a group water scheme. Louth County Council cannot influence Irish Water to extend mains supply.
- Odours from Waste Water Treatment Plants are a matter for the EPA. It was suggested Residents contact both Irish Water and EPA and ensure complaints are logged.

Economic Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure

- Cllr Joanna Byrne suggested that 'The Connecting Europe Facility Funding Programme' might be suitable to apply for Port Access Northern Cross funding as similar infrastructure had been funded in Donegal, and would forward details to Executive. The Chief Executive advised that all options would be considered but the preferred option at the moment was to encourage Developer led action for those with planning permissions on the route.
- Narrow Water Bridge – commencement of works not expected to end 2022.
- Members received an update on no. of Online Trading Vouchers processed.
- Members were advised that 140 applications had been received for Outdoor Dining and each applicant was being contacted in relation to planning issues raised. Further information was being sought in some cases.
- Drogheda was the only non city to be granted funding under the Urban Animation funding scheme which was a competitive process where Louth County Council liaised with BIDS.
- An update was requested on previous request to receive a briefing on Peace + funding scheme.

Operations & Waste Management

- Louth's low rating on litter enforcement & collection following publication of the IBAL report was discussed.
- CCTV which is a significant deterrent in litter enforcement efforts was noted as still prohibited for use towards prosecutions.
- A Multi Agency meeting was recently held with view to enforcement efforts and checkpoint stops.
- SEO in Operations will attend the next Drogheda BD meeting.

Corporate & Emergency Services

- No issues raised.

Housing & Quality of Life

- Louth County Council will get involved in tendering for contractors for Disabled Persons/Housing adaptation Grants, due to liability issues and as this is a contractual funding arrangement only between applicant and section.
- Library spend per capita with other counties is an unfair comparison to those counties with higher populations, Louth saw ever increasing Membership and has a loan scheme with other counties to obtain any books not in stock.

Minute No. 172/21

New Nomination to the Louth Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

In accordance with Section 36 of the Local Government Reform Act Members were requested to approve the deselection of Ms. Martina Ralph and the nomination of Ms. Bridie Pepper as the HSE representative on the LCDC committee. This was

Proposed by: Cllr. Maeve Yore

Seconded by: Cllr. Marianne Butler

And Resolved.

Minute No. 173/21

Freastal ar Chomhdhála a Cheadú / Approval of Attendance at Conferences

Approval of attendances at Conferences as notified to the Elected Members was

Proposed by: Cllr. Emma Coffey

Seconded by: Cllr. Marianne Butler

And Resolved.

Minute No. 174/21

Allocation of Members Community Grants

Approval of Allocation of Members Community Grants as notified to the Elected Members was

Proposed by: Cllr. Maeve Yore

Seconded by: Cllr. Liam Reilly

And Resolved.

Minute No. 175/21

MapAlerter - Communication App. - Briefing to Members

Director of Services Joe McGuinness gave Councillors a briefing on MapAlerter, which is an online app that Louth County Council has signed up to, allowing those who download the app get free access to alerts on Louth County Council works and other items of interest.

Members were advised of the following phasing of action on the App:

1. Phase One – Web Driven Alerts
2. Phase Two – Planned Maintenance Alerts
3. Phase Three - Emergency Alerts

Minute No. 176/21

Commission of Investigation into Mother and Babies Homes, October 2020. Report for Louth County Council

Director of Services Joe McGuinness gave Councillors a background on how the Louth report was commissioned following CPG discussions and motions raised by Members. The background of the Author, Denis Cahalane and his high level experience dealing with Child Welfare was advised.

Members discussed the report as issued, noted its historical importance, and commended the way it was sensitively handled. While the report itself was favourably received, the misery, hardship and systematic abuse of those attending homes was noted and the 57 references to Louth within the report commented on. It was commented that Louth not having a home itself at the time was more down to diocesan boundaries rather than any executive decision at that time. It was acknowledged that councils over decades were equally complicit and that it was a cautionary lesson for existing councils to always ensure good governance and practice.

A dedicated page on the council website was requested to direct those wishing to approach the archivist on how to request historical data and to source other assistance.

Minute No. 177/21

Notice of Motion - Cllr. Paula Butterly –

As Councillor Butterly was no longer online this item was not heard.

Seconded by:

That Louth County Council establishes an Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Committee.

The Agriculture and Fisheries sectors support thousands of jobs in the County and their combined value of output was circa €126m in 2020, equating to in excess of €180m in value of exports. Such a committee would allow crucial stakeholders to contribute to debates and proposals regarding environmental, economic and educational issues relative and specific to these sectors and their communities.

Key Objectives:

- 1. Environmental - that the next generation inherits a better County to the previous one.*
- 2. Education - promote, inform and educate on the importance of good food, its origins and its links to good health.*
- 3. Bridge the divide between the urban and rural communities.*
- 4. Sustainable Rural life - ensure that rural communities remain financially and economically viable, that communities continue to prosper and grow.*

Similar committees have been established within Donegal County Council and are proving to be successful.

Minute No. 178/21

Notice of Motion - Cllr. Tomas Sharkey
Seconded by: Cllr. Antóin Watters

"In respect of the financial costs incurred by LCC by giving cash flow support to the 2018 and 2019 Fleadh Committee, this council require a report to be issued by the Chief Executive outlining what steps were taken to comply with Section 104 of the Local Government Act 2001 and specifically"

(7) Where the manager has incurred additional expenditure under subsection (6), or to which a scheme under subsection (4) applies, he or she shall inform—

(a) without delay, the Cathaoirleach of the fact, and

(b) the members of the local authority of the fact at the next practicable meeting of the local authority following the incurring of additional expenditure, giving details of the additional expenditure and its implications for the local authority budget."

Cllr. Sharkey wished it noted that he appreciated the response and clarification that S104 referred to the Revenue Budget and that the Fleadh would not feature in Revenue Budget discussions.

Minute No. 179/21

Notice of Motion - Cllr. Emma Coffey
Seconded by: Cllr Liam Reilly

That Louth County Council give their support in the DKIT s.38 TU ACT application in obtaining University Status and ensuring that it becomes the 1st choice third level learning institution in the North East

Cllr Coffey thanked Members for support of this motion and referenced the briefing given by DKIT in relation to their proposal to gain Technical University status. It was noted that the earliest this could be achieved would be 2023.

Minute No. 180/21

Notice of Motion - Cllr. John Sheridan
Seconded by: Cllr Jim Tenanty

"To ask what the cost of the junction realignments in November 2020 at Sláns pub Annagassan and at Dillonstown church? What arrangements are made with the relevant stakeholders around the cost of the second realignment in June 2021 given it had to be realigned so soon after the first time it was done."

Minute No. 181/21

Notice of Motion - Cllr. Pearse McGeough
Seconded by: Cllr. Antóin Watters

At July's meeting of the Ardee Municipal I was informed that the outlay for the junction at Annagassan will cost €200,000.

As you can appreciate, I am concerned at this figure and require the following:

1. *Can I have a breakdown of this figure?*
2. *How much was spent on the second realignment to fix the 'upgrade'?*
3. *Were the same designers and on-site Company involved in both realignments?*
4. *Is there any insurance or clawback available to offset the cost of the second realignment as it was to fix an unsatisfactory or 'botched' job?*

Councillors Sheridan and McGeough accepted the response of the Executive in relation to their motions but queried the reason why it had happened and the measures in place to prevent future occurrences.

The Chief Executive admitted that things had gone wrong and advised of difficulty in coordinating services and different funding schemes during a pandemic. Efforts have been put in place to address this in future.

Minute No. 182/21

Notice of Motion - Cllr. Michelle Hall
Seconded by: Cllr. Maeve Yore

That Louth County Council will call on the Ministers for Justice; Education; and Children, Disability, Equality & Integration to collaborate and implement an Operation Encompass-style programme between An Garda Síochána and schools.

Operation Encompass is a police-led, school-based early intervention safeguarding scheme which supports children and young people who experience Domestic Abuse. Operation Encompass was created to ensure that by the start of the next school day, a child's school will be informed that there has been a police-attended incident of domestic abuse incident at the home of the child. The child is then supported immediately upon arrival at school.

Cllr. Hall thanked Members for supporting this Motion, and underlined the huge importance of being able to support children following domestic abuse incidents in their home. Members speaking in support of this motion noted that while domestic violence incidents increased during the pandemic reports of child abuse or neglect to Tusla decreased and considered this a direct correlation of teachers not having day to day contact with children. The importance of the school/home relationship in guarding child safety was highlighted.

Minute No. 183/21

Notice of Question Cllr. Pio Smith

Noted

“To ask the Local Authority to provide a list of all funding applications made by the Local Authority in 2020”

Minute No. 184/21

Notice of Question - Cllr. Tomas Sharkey

Noted

How many notices in writing have been issued by Louth County Council since January 2020 relevant to the Roads Act 1993 Section 76 detailed below?

(5) The owner or occupier of any land adjacent to a public road shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that

(a) water is not prevented, obstructed or impeded from draining into, onto, under, through or to his land from a public road,

(b) water, soil or other material is prevented from flowing or falling onto a public road from his land.

(6) A road authority may serve a notice in writing on the owner or occupier of any land adjacent to a public road requiring him to carry out specified works or take specified measures—

to ensure that water is not prevented, obstructed or impeded from draining into, onto, under, through or to his land from a public road,

to prevent water, soil or other material from flowing or falling onto a public road from his land.

Minute No. 185/21

Notice of Question - Cllr. M. Hall

Noted

How many houses applied for Vacant Housing Repair and Leasing Initiative with Louth County Council, how many were successful and how many are leased since the Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness Leasing Initiative began?

Minute No. 186/21

Chomhfhreagras / Correspondence

Correspondence received as follows was noted by Members:

- Minister of State Ref DJE-MOS-03854-2021 regarding use of Credit Cards in gambling.

Minute No. 187/21

Notices of Motion from other Councils

Correspondence on resolutions of other Councils as follows was noted by Members:

- Clare County Council 15th September
- Meath County Council 16th September
- Fermanagh & Omagh District Council 6th October

There being no other business, the meeting concluded.

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

Date: _____

Cathaoirleach: _____

Meeting Administrator: _____