



Comhairle Contae Lú
Louth County Council

Louth County Council February Meeting

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Louth County Council hosted in the Council Chamber of Co. Hall, Dundalk on Monday, 19th February 2024, at 10:00a.m.

In Attendance:

Presiding: Cathaoirleach: Councillor Paula Butterly

Members: Councillors: Marianne Butler, James Byrne, Joanna Byrne, Kevin Callan, Emma Coffey, Bernie Conlon, Edel Corrigan, Tom Cunningham, Emma Cutlip, Michelle Hall, Seán Kelly, Conor Keelan, Pearse McGeough, Andrea McKeivitt, Paddy McQuillan, Kevin Meenan, Dolores Minogue, Robert Nash, Declan Power, John Reilly, Liam Reilly, Tomás Sharkey, John Sheridan, Pio Smith, Jim Tenanty, Antóin Watters, Maeve Yore

Apologies: Councillors: Eileen Tully

Officials: Joan Martin, Chief Executive
Joe McGuinness, Director of Services
Gráinne Tuomey, Meeting Administrator
Bernie Woods, Director of Services
Eamon Woulfe, A/Director of Services
Yvonne O'Brien, A/Director of Services
David Jones, Director of Services
Ger Murphy, Director of Services
Joanna Kelly, Senior Planner
John O'Hagan, Senior Engineer
Mark Johnson, Senior Engineer
Finbar Gethins, Senior Executive Officer
David Hanratty, Senior Executive Officer
Colette Moss, Senior Executive Officer

Minute No. 20/24

Disorderly Conduct

Before commencing the meeting An Cathaoirleach Cllr Paula Butterly reminded Members of the need to respect to each other and staff and to maintain dignified towards all other Members and Staff. Responding to a later question raised the Cathaoirleach also confirmed a maximum speaking time of 4 minutes.

Minute No. 21/24

Standing Order no. 24, Suspension of Standing Order No. 11

Cllr Kevin Callan proposed Suspension of Standing Order No. 11 order of business, to update Members on recent statement which issued from the Members of Drogheda Borough District to media and letter which issued to the Minister on foot of announcement of 500 refugees to Drogheda.

In line with Standing Order no. 24 a roll call vote was held to determine the matter as follows.

Councillor	For	Against	Abstain	Absent
Marianne Butler				1
Paula Butterly	1			
James Byrne	1			
Joanna Byrne	1			
Kevin Callan	1			
Emma Coffey				1
Bernie Conlon	1			
Edel Corrigan				1
Tom Cunningham	1			
Emma Cutlip	1			
Michelle Hall	1			
Conor Keelan			1	
Sean Kelly	1			
Pearse McGeough				1
Andrea McKevitt				1
Paddy McQuillan	1			
Kevin Meenan				1
Dolores Minogue	1			
Robert Nash				1
Declan Power	1			
John Reilly	1			
Liam Reilly	1			
Tomás Sharkey				1
John Sheridan	1			
Pio Smith				1
Jim Tenanty	1			
Eileen Tully				1
Antóin Watters				1
Maeve Yore	1			
	17	0	1	11

As the required number of members present consented to this proposal under the above Standing Order, agreement was reached.

Cllr Callan read out the statement which had issued to Media from the Borough District Members and confirmed that correspondence had issued to the Minister seeking a meeting on the decision taken by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to sign a contract with the owners of the D Hotel on refugee accommodation. While the statement clearly cited support

of refugees by Members, concerns were raised about the effect on tourism, regional growth and local economic development should the one hotel in Drogheda not be available for tourism.

Minute No. 22/24

Minutes from Monthly Meeting held on 15th January 2024

Proposed by: Cllr Liam Reilly
Seconded by: Cllr Andrea McKeivitt
And Approved

Minute No. 23/24

Matters Arising

Min. no. 14/24 - Cllr Yore requested the wording be changed from "...Cllr Yore commenting that she had no recollection of **being asked** about twinning with Kentucky." To ... Cllr Yore commenting that she had no recollection of all **the pre-requisites** on twinning with Kentucky.
~ Seconded by Cllr Keelan.

Minute no. 3/24 Cllr Keelan suggested and wanted it noted that instead of the wording

"Cllr Keelan spoke at length, suggesting that Councillors themselves should review Standing Orders and the CPG should then review same."

The following was stated as correct:

*Cllr Keelan spoke at length, suggesting that Councillors themselves should review Standing Orders **within the chamber.***
~ Seconded by Cllr Sharkey

Minute no. 11/24 Cllr Keelan requested the word 'twice' changed to 'thrice'
~ Seconded by Cllr Sharkey

Minute no. 14/24 Cllr Keelan requested that the amended motion which had been passed be further amended to include the words after the '*And the motion was passed*' to read '*and therefore Dundalk became twinned with Bethlehem under a reserved function of Dundalk MD.*'

Cllr Keelan was strongly advised he could not amend the resolution of Council.

Minute no. 3/24 Cllr John Sheridan wanted to thank the Meeting Administrator for confirming changes made to the website and Freedom of Drogheda book to reflect the decision of Drogheda Borough District not to recognise the freedom previously awarded.

He separately further suggested that if Members had issues with the minutes these could perhaps be notified in advance of the meeting as Members receive them 7 days in advance. The Cathaoirleach agreed and suggested that if Members were raising items, they should come prepared rather than holding up the meeting.

Minute No. 24/24

Minutes of District Meetings – Noted

- Borough District of Drogheda 4th December 2023
- Municipal District of Dundalk 5th December 2023
- Municipal District of Ardee 7th December 2023
- Municipal District of Dundalk 9th January 2024

Minute No. 25/24

Minutes of Committee Meetings – Noted

- Climate Change and Energy SPC 27th November 2023
- Corporate Policy Group 3rd January 2024

Minute No. 26/24

Report from Chairpersons of Corporate Policy Group

An Cathaoirleach Cllr Paula Butterly reported on the February CPG meeting of the 7th February. Cllr Keelan immediately began to question specific items in her report namely LECP and the policy on twinning. Cllr Smith asked if the Cllr was allowed to disrupt the meeting under Standing Orders. An Cathaoirleach advised that it was her understanding the Members could ask questions on her CPG Report.

The Chief Executive suggested that she could respond to Cllr Keelan's queries, to which Cllr Keelan responded "You're not the Cathaoirleach". The Chief Executive having got clarity from the Cathaoirleach that she would like her to speak on her behalf advised Cllr Keelan that twinning was the last step of a process.

Cllr Sharkey sought clarification on the difference between the Cathaoirleach report on the CPG and the CPG minutes and which was the official record of the meeting. The Cathaoirleach advised that the minutes were the official record and her report was informative.

Minute No. 27/24

Report from Chairpersons of Strategic Policy Committees

Reports were given on the following SPCs by the following Elected Members:

- Community, Quality of Life and Creativity by Cllr Seán Kelly
- Economic Development and Enterprise Support by Cllr Pio Smith

Council Members were updated on items discussed and presentations given at the meetings.

Minute No. 28/24

Adoption of the Annual Service Delivery Plan – Deferred from the January Meeting

Joe McGuinness DOS referred to the plan as set out in the agenda before them and deferred from the January meeting, and confirmed that the Divisor to determine the per capita figures as set out in the plan was based on 2016 CSO census figures as set Nationally by NOAC for the performance indicator report.

Cllr Butler suggesting generally that figures should be 100% accurate and targets ambitious said she might write to NOAC under separate cover.

Adoption of the Annual Service Delivery Plan was:

Proposed by: Cllr. Marianne Butler

Seconded by: Cllr. Kevin Callan

And agreed.

Minute No. 29/24

Adoption of the Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029

Joe McGuinness Director of Service introduced the plan as set out before Members on the agenda and invited David Hanratty to give a brief overview on the process of how the Climate Action Plan was drafted.

David Hanratty presented Members with a breakdown of steps to date and advised that the Plan must be adopted by 24th February 2024 after which Louth County Council have 30 days to publish the Plan. He spoke to Members of Submissions received during the public consultation phase which he suggested made no substantive changes to the draft.

The work to draft the plan was praised, suggestions made, and questions were raised by Members all of which were responded to by the Executive.

Cllr Hall suggested that a quote attributed to Barack Obama be replaced with a quote from Mary Robinson which she read out and to which it was determined there were no objections.

Adoption of the Climate Action Plan with amended quote was:

Proposed by: Cllr Maeve Yore

Seconded by: Cllr Conor Keelan

And agreed.

Minute No. 30/24

Adoption of the Local Economic Community Plan 2024 – 2029

Joe McGuinness Director of Service introduced the plan as set out before Members on the agenda and invited Finbar Gethins to speak on the plan.

Mr Gethins advised Members of the input of 2 separate SPCs who bought had signed off on the plan as well as the LCDC. He spoke of how the plan set out high level goals, involved 34 public

Mr Gethins advised Members of the input of 2 separate SPCs who bought had signed off on the plan as well as the LCDC. He spoke of how the plan set out high level goals, involved 34 public consultation meetings across the county, and advised that the draft plan was brought to all three Municipal District meetings and the Regional Assembly for input, with ultimate sign off by both SPCs in January.

The process for drafting, adopting, implementing and reviewing the plan was presented to Members broken down into 6 separate stages. Members were cautioned that the plan was before them for adoption and that any proposed amendments must be consistent with the County Development Plan.

Members queried figures used for statistics and referenced recent deprivation index report figures for Louth, linkage with Strategic Development Goals, where items within the plan sit in relation to public policy, and why more recent data was not used to inform the plan.

Finbar Gethins advised the data used was the most recent at time of plan, how strategies emanating from the Plan use up to date data, the vast public consultation involved and again reminded Members of that any proposed amendments must be consistent with the County Development Plan.

Adoption of the Local Economic Community Plan 2024 – 2029 was:

Proposed by: Cllr Tomás Sharkey

Seconded by: Cllr Marianne Butler

And agreed.

Minute No. 31/24

Section 85 Agreement – Louth County Council & Meath County Council

David Jones, Director of Services explained that an agreement in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended) was before Members for approval. This would allow Louth County Council to carry out an extension of the current proposed Active Travel measures on the R132 further south along the R132 towards Southgate roundabout which crosses into County Meath.

In order for Louth County Council to carry out the works on behalf of Meath County Council, Members were advised that both Meath County Council and Louth County Council Members have to agree by Resolution. This S85 agreement had been approved by the Meath County Council Members at their January plenary meeting.

Adoption of the Agreement was proposed by Cllr James Byrne and seconded by Cllr Michelle Hall, with Cllr Byrne suggesting an amendment to the name Stameen Lawn to Stameen within the agreement. Mr Jones advised that an amendment could not be made as Meath had already resolved to adopt the agreement.

This was accepted by both Councillors and as there were no objections to the adoption of the Section 85 agreement the matter was resolved.

Minute No. 32/24

Additions to the 3 Year Capital Programme 2024 – 2026

Members noted the document on the 3 Year Capital Programme before them which set out three

additional funding proposals, namely 3 Community Gardens, Millmount Handball Alley feasibility study, and repairs to Millmount Wall.

Responding to questions raised, the Chief Executive confirmed that it was intended to provide funding for one community garden in each Municipal District on council lands. Some discussion took place around the exact location of same with Cllr Sharkey raising concerns about funding a pre-existing community garden in Muirhevnamor with Cllr Meenan suggesting that the location allowed monitoring by the Mens Shed and would support applications from the wider community.

Other items discussed included accessibility issues into the Handball alley, cost of feasibility studies, and ongoing maintenance requirements for Millmount.

Approval of the 'Additions to the 3 Year Capital Programme 2024 – 2026' was:

Proposed by: Cllr James Byrne,
Seconded by: Cllr Maeve Yore
and resolved.

Minute No. 33/24

Freastal ar Chomhdhálacha a Cheadú / Approval of Attendance at Conferences

Approval of attendance at conferences as presented on the agenda before them was:

Proposed by: Cllr Emma Coffey
Seconded by: Cllr Seán Kelly
And resolved

Minute No. 34/24

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

Approval of the grants as presented on the agenda before them was:

Proposed by: Cllr Maeve Yore
Seconded by: Cllr Antóin Watters
And resolved

Minute No. 35/24

Compliance with Section 141 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended

In accordance with Section 141 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended, (which requires Members to report at least annually on the activities and operations of Bodies, Boards and Committees to which they are elected, appointed or nominated to represent Louth County Council), reports were given on the following bodies/boards/committees by the following Councillors:

- Governance/Oversight Committee of the Dublin / Belfast Economic Corridor - 2023 Activities - Cllr Seán Kelly
- Carlingford Lough Commission - 2023 Activities– Cllr Andrea McKeivitt
- Dundalk BIDS – 2023 Activities – Cllr Marianne Butler

- Louth Meath Education & Training Board – 2023 Activities – Cllr Marianne Butler
- Creative Spark - 2023 Activities – Cllr Marianne Butler

Cllr Keelan spoke to ask that 'reporting requirements be removed from the list signed by the Director of Services' and was advised that this is done as a matter of course. He said it 'hasn't been done this far' and named Joe McGuinness and suggested that *"he needed to be kept on his toes"*.

The Chief Executive advised through the chair that the Councillors comments were unnecessary, to which Cllr Keelan replied "Is it really?" and continued to speak over both the Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive.

An Cathaoirleach advised Cllr Keelan he was out of order and requested that he apologise, this was supported by Cllr Liam Reilly but ignored by Cllr Keelan.

Cllr Butterly again requested Cllr Keelan to apologise, Cllr Keelan asked "For What!"

Cllr Butterly advised that Cllr Keelan was being disrespectful, that the continuous disruption was not fair on fellow members and instructed Cllr Keelan to apologise.

Cllr Keelan asked "Which one exactly do you want me to apologise for" The Chief Executive advised that the list was purely an administrative matter and there was no need for this behaviour.

He then asked "Why is EMRA still on the list then."

The Chief Executive advised that it had been pointed out at the last meeting that he was giving the minutes of a meeting where an annual report was required. Cllr Keelan suggested that "Didn't actually challenge at the county meeting" and started talking about zoom...

Cllr Liam Reilly again reminded that the Cllr had been requested by the Cathaoirleach to apologise, and referred to behaviour of the Cllr which was ongoing on for several months, and said that he felt over the last 12 months that there was not a welcoming environment in the Chamber, he stated that Cllr Keelan "had been asked for an apology" and that he should "apologise and move on".

Cllr James Byrne spoke to second what Cllr Reilly had said and remarked that there was an implication made about the Director, and said to Cllr Keelan "I feel you have to apologise and I ask that your tone and attitude changes."

Cllr Keelan did not respond.

An Cathaoirleach advised she was going to rise and did so.

Cllr Sharkey who had requested to 'move on' during the above discussion which had been seconded by Cllr Keelan, challenged the right of the Cathaoirleach to rise and now suggested that the Leas-Chathoirleach took the chair in the Cathaoirleach's absence. The Leas-Chathoirleach Cllr Andrea McKevitt advised she would not be taking the Chair and was in agreement with Cllrs Reilly and Byrne and all about the behaviour of Cllr Keelan.

The meeting was briefly adjourned until the Cathaoirleach's return.

On the return of the Cathaoirleach, Cllr Butterly asked Cllr Keelan if he was going to issue an apology.

Cllr Keelan stated that having taken cognisance of his actions and listened to senior counsel in the room, he would hate to think that anything he might have said may have impugned the integrity of anyone.

The Cathaoirleach moved the meeting on.

Minute No. 36/24

Consideration of Reports and Recommendations from Chief Executive Monthly Management Report

Members considered the Report as presented to them, raised questions, and received responses from the Executive.

The following items were highlighted under the relevant Directorates:

Support Services

- Members were reminded that Louth County Council no longer deal with Water Services and queries on same must be referred to Uisce Eireann

Strategic Economic Development

- The Chief Executive advised that having considered a specific question raised by a member, both she and the Senior Planner Joanna Kelly were satisfied that under planning regulations the class of use for refugee accommodation was the same as hotel accommodation and there were no other aspects on enforcement from a legal point of view
- The possible response and input of Louth County Council once refugees arrive was described as very case specific and could not be known until the breakdown of family groups was known, but it was considered that the Migration Implementation Team was most likely to lead the response and coordination of all required bodies and services
- It was hoped that if agreement could be reached PANCR Phase 2 could break ground in Q2, 2024. Planning permission and design is in place. A drawing will issue to Members in next CE Report
- The Brigid 1500 celebrations were discussed with many suggestions made to expand to include other bodies, counties and recognition of other saints and to issue invitations internationally. The Chief Executive cautioned that while elements of the event will continue the event was very time and money resource heavy and was very much a one off, very special celebration
- Cllr Hall expressed her displeasure on lack of staff attendance at Peace Plus sub groups and said that while she had proposed locations for mini hubs, Louth was the only County in the group that had not applied for funding. She looked for a Q&A on why were weren't applying for grants. The Chief Executive advised that the Senior Management Team having discussed the scheme and sought advice, did not consider that there was a gap in locations where hubs were required. She named several existing hubs, and advised that the council did not chase money for the sake of it, and stated that it was up to Directors to prioritise what meetings they can attend and as Chief Executive she respected their decisions
- A request to review the ownership of the site of Faughart Graveyard and St Brigid Well was requested

Placemaking & Physical Development

- Confirmation of Department funding of €12.9m for the Road Works Programme (RPW) was discussed with €1m noted for emergency flood works to roads while €1.6m was applied for

- Guidance is awaited on CCTV usage for enforcement
- Amendments have been made to the 2024 Road Opening Licence application scheme to strengthen conditions around reinstatement
- While Storm Isha caused some damage and delay to works on Obelisk Bridge, it is still expected to make deadline for completion by end of May
- Surveys continue on the proposed Drogheda to Baltray CFRAM

Organisational Development

- Referendum Polling Station Locations are a matter for the County Registrar and not Louth County Council
- A delegation will be attending the St. Patrick's Day festival in New York, consisting of the Cathaoirleach of MDs and County and relevant staff

Social Development

- The Affordable Housing Scheme in Blackrock consisting of 10 units is closing for applications on 28th February with all units expected to sell
- Tenants are updated on the progress of maintenance requests and heating works as best the team can, however a huge volume of maintenance requests and works carried out through contractor engagement raises difficulties in ongoing communication
- Cllr Keelan commenced speaking about the agreement between Clann and Cluid, Clann and Great Haven but at the 2nd extension of time voted for by Members had run out, the meeting concluded.

Minute no. 37/24

Suspension of Standing Order No. 3

During the meeting the following Suspensions of Standing Order no. 3 were resolved:

As the time was approaching 13.30hrs Members were advised of the need to stand or suspend standing orders to extend the meeting time to conclude business. A extension of time to 2pm was suggested and a roll call vote held as follows:

Councillor	For	Against	Abstain	Absent
Marianne Butler	1			
Paula Butterly	1			
James Byrne	1			
Joanna Byrne	1			
Kevin Callan				1
Emma Coffey	1			
Bernie Conlon	1			
Edel Corrigan	1			
Tom Cunningham	1			
Emma Cutlip	1			
Michelle Hall	1			
Conor Keelan	1			
Sean Kelly	1			

Pearse McGeough	1			
Andrea McKevitt	1			
Paddy McQuillan				1
Kevin Meenan	1			
Dolores Minogue	1			
Robert Nash	1			
Declan Power	1			
John Reilly	1			
Liam Reilly				1
Tomás Sharkey				1
John Sheridan	1			
Pio Smith				1
Jim Tenanty				1
Eileen Tully				1
Antóin Watters	1			
Maeve Yore	1			
	22	0	0	7

And the extension of time was agreed.

As the time was approaching 14.00hrs Members were advised of the need to end the meeting or again suspend standing orders to extend the meeting time. An extension of time to 2.15pm was suggested and a roll call vote held as follows:

Councillor	For	Against	Abstain	Absent
Marianne Butler	1			
Paula Butterly	1			
James Byrne	1			
Joanna Byrne				1
Kevin Callan				1
Emma Coffey	1			
Bernie Conlon	1			
Edel Corrigan				1
Tom Cunningham	1			
Emma Cutlip	1			
Michelle Hall				1
Conor Keelan	1			
Sean Kelly	1			
Pearse McGeough	1			
Andrea McKevitt	1			
Paddy McQuillan				1
Kevin Meenan	1			

Dolores Minogue	1			
Robert Nash	1			
Declan Power	1			
John Reilly	1			
Liam Reilly	1			
Tomás Sharkey				1
John Sheridan	1			
Pio Smith				1
Jim Tenanty				1
Eileen Tully				1
Antóin Watters	1			
Maeve Yore	1			
	20	0	0	9

And it was agreed to extend the meeting until 2.15pm

Minute no. 38/24

Notice of Question – Cllr Pio Smith

In accordance with Standing Order 12 (vii)(a) Where a member in whose name a Notice of Question appears on the Agenda is not present at the meeting when that item falls due for discussion the response was noted and the matter deemed to be dealt with.

Minute no. 39/24

Remaining Notices of Motion/Questions

In accordance with Standing Order 12 (vii)(b) all other Notices of Motion and Question were adjourned to the next monthly meeting, but the maximum limit of 2 Notices in total per Member would stand.

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

Date: 25 March 2024

Cathaoirleach: 

Meeting Administrator: 