



Comhairle Contae Lú  
Louth County Council

## **Louth County Council Monthly Meeting**

Minutes of the Annual Budget Meeting of Louth County Council hosted in the Council Chamber of Co. Hall, Dundalk on Monday, 18th November 2024, at 2:00p.m.

### **In Attendance:**

Presiding: Councillor, Kevin Callan – Cathaoirleach

Members: Councillors: Marianne Butler, Paula Butterly, James Byrne, Joanna Byrne, Emma Coffey, Eric Donovan, Ciaran Fisher, Anne-Marie Ford, Michelle Hall, Sean Kelly, Andrea McKeivitt, Pearse McGeough, Shane McGuinness, Kevin Meenan, Fiona MhicConchoille, Dolores Minogue, Ejiro O'Hare-Stratton, Declan Power, John Sheridan, Pio Smith, Jim Tenanty, Antóin Watters, Maeve Yore

Apologies: Cllrs. Bernie Conlon, Robert Nash

Officials: Joe McGuinness, Temporary Chief Executive  
Ger Murphy, Director of Services  
David Jones, Director of Services  
Thomas McEvoy, Director of Services  
Bernie Woods, Director of Finance  
David Hanratty, A/Director of Services  
Bryan Coughlan, Meeting Administrator  
Finbar Gethins, Senior Executive Officer  
John O'Hagan, Senior Engineer  
Joanna Kelly, Senior Planner  
Colette Moss, Senior Executive Officer

### **Minute No. 312/24**

At the outset of the meeting, it was agreed that Condolences and Congratulations would be proposed.

Cllr. Maeve Yore proposed condolences to the families of Michale Reade and Margie McCormack. These were seconded by Cllr. Antoin Watters

Congratulations were offered the Drogheda United on their recent victory in the FAI Cup final. Many Members spoke to congratulate the club and in particular referenced the work of Cllr. Joanna Byrne. In response to the remarks Cllr. Byrne noted the assistance of the Temporary Chief Executive, Joe McGuinness over the previous few weeks.

Cllr. Dolores Minogue also offered congratulations to Ardee St. Mary's and wished them well in their provincial campaign in the coming weeks.

### **Minute No. 313/24**

#### **Temporary Chief Executive introduction**

The Temporary Chief Executive introduced the draft Budget for 2025 and set out the process. He stated that it had commenced in the previous months and a significant milestone was the previous month when Members voted to not change the rate of Local Property Tax. He also advised that Members that they had 14 days from the date of the Budget meeting to adopt it and that from an Executive perspective, a balanced budget had been presented as required. Several challenges were again identified, including:

- The cost of meeting the Workplace Relations Commission agreement for the Retained Fire Service.
- Increased energy costs
- Decarbonising the Council's plant and fleet
- Providing match funding for various capital projects

However, it was also confirmed that in recent weeks there had been an unexpected boost due to new rate valuations being received.

In total, expenditure of €184 million is provided for 2025 in the draft budget, an increase of €12.3 million from 2024.

#### **Transfer of Councillors conference allowance to Councillor allocations**

Before considering the budget itself, Members each signed a form stating a preference to transfer their individual conference allocation of €700 each to Councillor allocations.

The overall transfer was

**Proposed by:** Cllr. Kevin Callan  
**Seconded by:** Cllr. Paula Butterly  
And Approved

### **Minute No. 314/24**

#### **Consideration of Draft Budget**

In considering the Draft Budget, Members had several queries relating to the various programmes. The primary points of note were:

- As per the Local Property Tax presentation provided to Members on 18<sup>th</sup> October, there would be no additional funding available for line marking in 2025.
- Some additional funding is being made available for road maintenance, but this will not cover Tertiary Roads, but local and secondary only. Funding may be sought for Tertiary Roads through the Community Involvement Scheme.

- The reduction in funding for festivals is due to the reduction in funding that will be received from Fáilte Ireland.
- Cllr. Michelle Hall and Cllr. Ejiro O'Hare Stratton questioned the expenditure levels in economic development and the outcomes that were associated with same.
- As part of a wider conversation on Development Levies, Cllr. Paula Butterly stated that development levies resulting from offshore projects should be ringfenced for coastal erosion works.
- In response to a query on the size of the climate budget from Cllr. Michelle Hall, David Hanratty advised that climate action was embedded throughout the budget and individual sections would be spending on measures.

The budget was proposed by Cllr. Kevin Callan and seconded by Cllr. Paula Butterly.

Following a roll-call vote was taken on the resolution to

*Adopt the Temporary Chief Executive's Draft Budget of Louth County Council for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025, and subject to the provisions of Section 103 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended by the Local Government Reform Act, 2014*

The result was as follows:

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstain</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Marianne Butler	1			
Paula Butterly	1			
James Byrne	1			
Joanna Byrne	1			
Kevin Callan	1			
Emma Coffey				1
Bernie Conlon				1
Eric Donovan	1			
Ciaran Fisher				1
Anne-Marie Ford	1			
Michelle Hall	1			
Sean Kelly				1
Sionainn McCann				1
Pearse McGeough	1			
Shane McGuinness	1			
Andrea McKeivitt	1			
Paddy McQuillan				1
Fiona MhicConchoille	1			
Kevin Meenan	1			
Dolores Minogue		1		
Robert Nash				1
Ejiro O'Hare Stratton	1			
Declan Power	1			
John Reilly				1
John Sheridan	1			
Pio Smith	1			
Jim Tenanty	1			
Antoin Watters	1			
Maeve Yore	1			
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And resolved.

## **Minute No. 315/24**

### **Annual Rate on Valuation**

The members considered, subject to section 6 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019 as amended and in accordance with the Budget adopted, the annual rate on valuation applicable in the calculation of the amount of the rate under Section 3 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019 as amended. It was agreed that there would be no change to the Annual Rate on Valuation on the

**Proposed by :** Cllr. Kevin Callan  
**Seconded by:** Cllr. Andrea McKeivitt  
And Adopted

## **Minute No. 316/24**

### **Scheme for the abatement of rates**

Louth County Council has authority to make a scheme for the abatement of rates due to it by liable persons, or classes of liable persons, in respect of vacant properties in accordance with the provisions of Section 9 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019, The Temporary Chief Executive proposed a scheme that would provide for a 50% abatement of rates on vacant premises for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025.

The scheme as proposed by the Temporary Chief Executive was

**Proposed by :** Cllr. Michelle Hall  
**Seconded by:** Cllr. Maeve Yore  
And Adopted

## **Minute No. 317/24**

### **Capital Programme 2025 – 2027**

The Capital Programme 2025 – 2027 was noted by Members.

At the conclusion of the meeting the Temporary Chief Executive thanked the members for their positive engagement through the process and the Director of Finance and her staff for the work and preparation undertaken in the same process.

There being no other business the meeting concluded.

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

Date: 16/12/24.

Cathaoirleach: Méiri Callan.

Meeting Administrator: 