



Comhairle Contae Lú  
Louth County Council

## **Louth County Council Monthly Meeting**

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Louth County Council hosted in the Council Chamber of Co. Hall, Dundalk on Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024, at 10:00a.m.

### **In Attendance:**

Presiding: Councillor, Kevin Callan – Cathaoirleach

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

Apologies:

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  
Yvonne O'Brien, A/Director of Services  
Bryan Coughlan, Meeting Administrator  
Finbar Gethins, Senior Executive Officer  
John O'Hagan, Senior Engineer  
Joanna Kelly, Senior Planner  
Roisin McAuley, Financial Management Accountant  
Colette Moss, Senior Executive Officer  
Willie Walsh, Senior Executive Officer

### **Minute No. 173/24**

#### **Minutes from meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

Thomas McEvoy requested that minute 168/24 circulated be amended to correct that the plebiscite regarding Drogheda Business Improvement District would be coming to the Council in October rather than September:-

**Proposed by:** Cllr Maeve Yore  
**Seconded by:** Cllr Joanna Byrne  
**And Approved**

### **Minute No. 174/24**

#### **Minutes of District Meetings - Noted**

- Municipal District of Ardee 2nd May 2024
- Municipal District of Dundalk 7th May 2024
- Municipal District of Dundalk 4th June 2024
- Municipal District of Ardee Annual Meeting 27th June 2024
- Borough District of Drogheda Annual Meeting 1st July 2024
- Borough District of Drogheda 1st July 2024
- Municipal District of Ardee 4th July 2024
- Borough District of Drogheda Special Meeting 6th August 2024

### **Minute No. 175/24**

#### **Minutes of Committee Meetings - Noted**

- Corporate Policy Group 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2024
- Corporate Policy Group Special Meeting 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2024

### **Minute No. 176/24**

#### **Report from Chairperson of Corporate Policy Group**

A report was delivered, by the Chairperson of the Corporate Policy Group Cllr. Kevin Callan, on proceedings from the Corporate Policy Group meetings held on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2024 and 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

### **Minute No. 177/24**

#### **Report from Chairpersons of Strategic Policy Committees**

There was no report to be delivered as the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) scheme had not been approved and the SPCs had not been established.

### **Minute No. 178/24**

#### **Approval of attendance at conferences**

**Proposed by:** Cllr. Pio Smith  
**Seconded by:** Cllr. Joanna Byrne  
**And resolved**

## **Minute No. 179/24**

### **Allocation of Members Community Grants provided for under Section 66 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended**

**Proposed by:** Cllr. Antoin Watters  
**Seconded by:** Cllr. Pio Smith  
**And resolved**

## **Minute No. 180/24**

### **To agree a variation to the basic rate of Local Property Tax 2025 – Local Adjustment Factor**

Bernie Woods delivered a presentation which set out the impact that various degrees of variation would have on both households in the county and also on Council revenue. Joe McGuinness informed the members that based on 2025 spending pressures, it is estimated that an additional €2 million will be required to maintain service delivery at 2024 levels. He stated that his preference was that this would be raised by a combination of a Local Property Tax (LPT) increase and commercial rates.

There was significant discussion by the members about the merits of increasing the LPT, or otherwise. It was agreed to defer the vote in order to allow the Whips to meet with Joe McGuinness and Bernie Woods over the coming weeks before voting at a special meeting of the Council. The special meeting is to be held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at 7.15pm in County Hall.

**Proposed by:** Cllr Pio Smith  
**Seconded by:** Cllr Kevin Callan  
**And resolved**

## **Minute No. 181/24**

### **To agree a date and time for the 2025 Budget meeting and agree dates and times for the meeting of the Municipal/Borough Districts to consider Draft Budgetary Plans.**

The MD/BDs will meet as follows to agree their Draft Budgetary Plans:

Drogheda BD:	9am 21 <sup>st</sup> October 2024
Ardee MD:	9.20am 21 <sup>st</sup> October 2024
Dundalk MD:	9.40am 21 <sup>st</sup> October 2024

The 2025 County Council budget meeting will take place immediately following the November monthly meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

**Proposed by:** Cllr Kevin Meenan  
**Seconded by:** Cllr Emma Coffey  
**And resolved**

## **Minute No. 182/24**

### **Approval of €5million overdraft facility for 2025**

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

## **Minute No. 183/24**

### **Adoption of Draft SPC scheme**

The Chief Executive provided an overview of the Draft SPC scheme alongside a summary of the submissions received during the period that it was on public consultation.

There was considerable discussion about whether there was a way to bring young people into the SPC scheme through a specific channel. There was further discussion about what SPC the agricultural sector should be represented on, but it was agreed that Sustainability was the appropriate committee.

It was agreed to proceed with the SPC Scheme as proposed, but that Chief Executive would look at options to allow youth involvement.

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

## **Minute No. 184/24**

### **Nomination to BIDS Drogheda**

Cllr. Ejiro O'Hare-Stratton was nominated to BIDS Drogheda on the

**Proposal of:** Cllr. Kevin Callan  
**Seconded by:** Cllr. Paddy McQuillan  
**And resolved**

## **Minute No. 185/24**

### **Section 183 – Proposed disposal of lands at site of Coláiste Chú Chulainn Post Primary School, Lower Marshes, Dundalk Compliance with Section 141 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended**

Approval of the disposal to the Minister for Education as presented to Members was

**Proposed by:** Cllr. Andrea McKeivitt  
**Seconded by:** Cllr. Marianne Butler  
**And resolved**

### **Minute No. 186/24**

#### **Section 183 – Proposed disposal of lands at 14 Donore Road, Drogheda**

Approval of the disposal of Fee Simple to Michael and Gillian Plunkett as presented to Members was

**Proposed by:** Cllr. Kevin Callan  
**Seconded by:** Cllr. Pio Smith  
**And resolved**

### **Minute No. 187/24**

#### **Section 183 – Proposed disposal of lands at 3 Highfield, Drogheda**

Approval of the disposal of Fee Simple to Adrian Sullivan and Giedre Jocaityte as presented to Members was

**Proposed by:** Cllr. Kevin Callan  
**Seconded by:** Cllr. Michelle Hall  
**And resolved**

### **Minute No. 188/24**

#### **Section 183 – Proposed disposal of lands adjacent to Drogheda Landfill Site**

This item was deferred until the October monthly meeting.

### **Minute No. 189/24**

#### **Section 183 – Proposed disposal of lands located in the townlands of Commons, Greenbatter and Newtownstalaban**

Following discussions which brought clarity to the supporting documentation, approval of the disposal of lands to Murphy Homes LTD as presented to the members was

**Proposed by:** Cllr. Kevin Callan  
**Seconded by:** Cllr. James Byrne  
**And resolved**

### **Minute No. 190/24**

#### **Approval of nomination of new member to Local Community Development Committee**

The nomination of Mr. Hubert Murphy was

**Proposed by:** Cllr. Bernie Conlon  
**Seconded by:** Cllr. Anne Marie Ford  
**And resolved**

## Minute No. 191/24

### Implementation of National Speed Limit Review – Rural Local Road

David Jones noted the following in relation to the implementation of the National Speed Limit Review in respect of Rural Local Roads. The particular points of note were:

- All Rural Local Roads in the County will default to 60km/hr at the end of November
- The matter of the former N52 (Ardee to Dundalk) as an exception was highlighted – as said road is currently unclassified, the default classification is that of a Local Road and therefore the default speed limit will apply at the end of November unless a special speed limit is introduced through the introduction of a Speed Limit Bye Law (Reserved Function). Draft Bye Law to maintain the current 80km/h speed limit on the former N52 is currently out for public consultation and due to go before Members for consideration at the October Meeting
- Subsequent phases of the implementation of the National Speed Limit Review due to take place next year, relate to a new default speed limit of 30km/hr in urban areas and 80km/hr for National Secondary roads

In response to queries from Cllr. Coffey and Cllr. Watters, the following was noted:

- New speed limit signs to be installed to coincide with the introduction of the new default speed limit
- New default speed limit for Rural Local Roads will not alter the current assessment in respect of planning applications
- Statutory timeframes regarding the Special Speed Limit Bye Law regarding the former N52 are being observed

## Minute No. 192/24

### New members of the Audit Committee

The nominations of:-

Ms. Irene McCausland  
Mr. Gerry Leydon  
Mr. Gerry Murphy

As external members of the Louth County Council Audit Committee were

**Proposed by:** Cllr. Kevin Callan  
**Seconded by:** Cllr. Maeve Yore  
**And resolved**

Cllr. Marianne Butler suggested that in the future it could be considered to appoint external members via an open call.

## Minute No. 193/24

### Consideration of Reports and Recommendations from Chief Executives Monthly Management Report

**Proposed by:** Cllr. Kevin Callan  
**Seconded by:** Cllr. James Byrne  
**And resolved**

#### Strategic Economic Development

The following was discussed in relation to Strategic Economic Development:

- Information leaflet on invasive species are to be circulated to raise awareness of the impact that they can have on buildings.
- Tourism strategy tenders have been evaluated and it is anticipated that the appointment will take place in the coming weeks.
- Lú Festival was funded by Fáilte Ireland for a period of 3 years, concluding in 2024.
- The Táin Trail will be integrated with the Carlingford Greenway.

Other matters discussed included the Boyne Valley Tourism board, the Sea Louth website, the Carlingford Ferry and the Shopfront Enhancement Scheme.

#### Placemaking & Physical Development

The following was discussed in relation to Placemaking and Physical Development

- David Jones to assess temporary solution to any requirement for school wardens.
- There is a potential issue with erosion at the beach hut in Clogherhead.
- A discussion took place regarding how submissions made regarding the non-statutory consultation process for the Greenway in Cooley would be responded to
- Weight restrictions may have to be considered for roads around Narrow Water Bridge.
- €0.5million has been allocated to upgrade bus shelters in the County and suitable locations are being identified currently.
- A small number of matters are being finalized before the Ardee 2040 plan is submitted to An Bord Pleanála.
- The Council will endeavor to progress the Rock Road footpath subject to funding.
- The Council will be undertaking maintenance of the Ramparts River.

Other matters discussed included the boardwalk at the Boyne River, the works carried out on the R166, Active Travel, the requirement for dog bins at Haggardstown and the importance of the Ardee Bypass being delivered.

#### Organisational Development

The matters discussed in relation to Organisational Development were:

- The Dundalk Running Track is with the consultant and it is expected that a contract will be awarded.
- Recruitment of staffing is ongoing for Dundalk Sports Centre.
- 25 Expressions of Interest being assessed under the Community Recognition Fund
- Data Protection Impact Assessment to be undertaken as part of the process of rolling out CCTV.

- Drawdown of Community Climate Action funding will occur in November/December and will be distributed in January.
- Unclear as to what caused the requirement for a bathing water restriction at Clogherhead but the failure occurred shortly after UE reported a malfunction in the Clogherhead WWTP.

## Social Development

The following was discussed in relation to Social Development:

- There is a need to look at the waiting list for social housing tenants who are on the transfer list. Cllr. Joanna Byrne highlighted the need to be innovative. In response Ger Muphy stated that the number of transfers is increasing but that the Council is constrained by the lack of available 4 bed properties.
- Cllr. John Sheridan passed on compliments to all involved in the delivery and opening of Dunleer Library.
- Cllr. Pearse McGeough requested that the 5 year rule when applying for Disabled Person Grants be revised to a shorter time period
- A request was made by Cllr. Joanna Byrne for Councillor's to receive a tour of the Paradise Place Family Hub.

Other matters discussed included the Age Friendly Garden Care & Repair project in Ardee, the protocol for dealing with housefires in LCC properties, the definition of someone being adequately housed, and the Council's policy on drug debt intimidation.

## Ukraine Humanitarian Response

In response to a query from Cllr. Yore, Yvonne O'Brien stated that the Council is in consultation with the Community Integration Forum regarding a Louth version of the *fact versus fiction* flier.

### Minute No. 194/24

**Notice of Motion:** Cllr. Declan Power

**Seconded by:** Cllr. Kevin Callan

*That Louth County Council provide all year round water testing at all our Blue Flag beaches in an effort to keep our all-year swimmers safe and healthy*

### Reply from Joe McGuinness, Temporary Chief Executive:

*Currently Louth County Council tests water quality during the bathing water season, from 1<sup>st</sup> June to 15<sup>th</sup> September, which coincides with the Blue Flag Season. Under BATHING WATER QUALITY (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2024, which came into force on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024, changes have been made as to how the bathing seasons are defined. These regulations place the responsibility on local authorities to define the bathing water season, with a minimum duration 01/06 to 15/09. The bathing water season can be expanded in areas where, in the opinion of the authority, 'large numbers' of bathers are present outside of the regular season.*

*(6) In this Regulation "large number" means, in relation to bathers, a number that the local authority considers to be large having regard, in particular, to past trends or to any infrastructure or facilities provided, or other measures taken, to promote bathing*

*It is not currently our intention to expand upon the current testing regimen, but rather to monitor bathing water numbers, via spot checks, over the next 18 months, in order to establish if large numbers of bathers are regularly observed.*

During the debate, the motion was extended to include Blackrock beach on the proposal of Shane McGuinness, seconded by Kevin Callan. All of the speakers were in support of the motion and the Chief Executive stated that he would examine options.

#### **Minute No. 195/24**

**Notice of Motion:** Cllr. Shane McGuinness  
**Seconded by:** Cllr. John Sheridan

*I am Calling on this council to examine and report to the members on all possible avenues that can be initiated to provide the completion of the section of link road from the L3161 Marlbog Roundabout to the L7163 Chapel Road Roundabout at Haggardstown in front of the Wuxi entrance.*

*That the Council consider making provision in the annual budget for the project, liaise with the relevant government departments responsible for providing funding for such projects and also consider the large businesses in the area which provide substantial rates to the county on an annual basis.*

*This motion is advanced in the interests of the local community, in the interests of health and safety and the realisation of the area's potential going forward.*

#### **Reply from David Jones, Director of Placemaking and Physical Development**

*The proposed link road from L-3161 Marlbog Roundabout to the L7163 Chapel Road as contained in Louth County Council's County Development Plan 2021-2027, forms part of several proposed link roads in Dundalk that are supported within the current County Development Plan. However, there are no plans or budget at present to progress this link road directly by Louth County Council, but rather it is envisaged that this future enabling infrastructure will be developer driven as and when the opportunity arises.*

#### **Minute No. 196/24**

**Notice of Motion:** Cllr. Kevin Callan  
**Seconded by:** Cllr. Dolores Minogue

*Seeking the consent and agreement of the elected members of Louth County Council for the Cathaoirleach to seek to request to meet relevant Government Ministers and their respective departments which have responsibility for the national rail network and funding of same.*

*That the Cathaoirleach can seek to arrange such meetings which would facilitate cross party attendance by all elected groupings of the council to discuss and to advocate for the provision of a Drogheda North Train Station and the reopening of a Mid Louth Station with specific reference to Dunleer.*

*Such efforts would be to provide easier access to more sustainable public transport and to assist those living in the county and commuting to work.*

#### **Reply from David Jones, Director of Placemaking and Physical Development**

*This is a matter for the Members.*

There was significant discussion on this motion, with a number of members raising a number of concerns about the rail infrastructure in County Louth. Cllr. Sean Kelly highlighted that the cost of parking in Clarke Station, Dundalk has been prohibitive for people who may otherwise use rail transport while Cllr. Dolores Minogue stated that the re-opening of Dunleer Station should also be prioritised. Cllr. Minogue stressed that a push to improve rail infrastructure had to come from the Council chamber.

#### **Minute No. 197/24**

**Notice of Motion:** Cllr. Ejiro O'Hare Stratton

**Seconded by:** Cllr. Kevin Callan

*This Council expresses its deep concern over the repeated failure to secure critical funding opportunities, as evidenced by the recent announcement of over €16 million in community project funding from which Louth County received nothing. Given the significant contributions our communities have made in supporting those in need, it is unacceptable that Louth continues to miss out while neighbouring counties benefit. This Council resolves to take immediate action to ensure that future funding opportunities are not overlooked and that our county secures the resources it deserves.*

#### **Reply from Joe McGuinness, Temporary Chief Executive:**

*Louth is allocated €1,317,173 under the Community Recognition Fund 2024 out of a €50 million National Fund. This funding is still in place and no funding opportunity was overlooked or missed.*

In speaking to the motion, Cllr. O'Hare Stratton stated that in her view it was too difficult to apply for funding and that there were too many layers. Cllr. Yore stated that it is difficult to be aware of the various funding sources available and suggested that there should be a sole point of responsibility for the co-ordination of same.

The Chief Executive stated that no funding was lost in this case and that due to the poor quality of applications received originally, training had been provided to potential applicants.

#### **Minute No. 198/24**

**Notice of Motion:** Cllr. James Byrne

*That Louth County Council seeks to implement a more streamline process to the Road Works Programme for 2025 and beyond so that the schedule of works can commence in June and completed before the return of schools at the end of August, insofar as possible.*

As Cllr. Byrne was not present, it was agreed to defer this until the October monthly meeting.

#### **Minute No. 199/24**

**Notice of Motion:** Cllr. Ejiro O'Hare-Stratton

**Seconded by:** Cllr. Kevin Callan

*This Council notes with concern the current state of the piece of land located behind Meadow View, opposite the Mill Hub. The land's proximity to a school and residential buildings raises significant*

*safety concerns due to its potential to be used for illegal activities, including drug dealing and anti-social behaviour.*

*This Council resolves to:*

- 1. Conduct a risk assessment of the area.*
- 2. Increase security measures, such as CCTV and patrols.*
- 3. Secure the land with fencing.*
- 4. Explore options to repurpose the land for community use.*
- 5. Ensure regular maintenance of the site.*

*Rationale: Immediate action is needed to prevent this land from becoming a hotspot for criminal activity and to protect the safety of the community.*

### **Reply from Ger Murphy, Director of Social Development**

*The Housing Section is currently progressing the development of a 46-unit social housing scheme for persons over the age of 55 at this location with a view to site works commencing before the end of 2024 as per the requirements of the Section 179a planning process which facilitates accelerated delivery of local authority housing projects.*

### **Minute No. 200/24**

**Notice of Motion:** Cllr. Paula Butterly

*I call on this Chamber to pass a motion whereby a review is conducted of all the protected structures on the Record of Protected Structures in County Louth with immediate effect, focusing in equal measure on urban, rural buildings and their curtilages.*

*Said review is to be completed within twelve months of the passing of this motion and a list of protected structures, containing no less than one hundred structures, is to be brought before the Chamber on a quarterly basis for review and approval by the Members.*

As Cllr. Butterly was not present, it was agreed to defer this until the October monthly meeting.

### **Minute No. 201/24**

**Notice of Question:** Cllr. Pio Smith

*Asking that the local authority outline a list of government schemes that required match funding that was applied for in 2023 and 2024.*

### **Reply: J. McGuinness, Director of Organisation Development and D. Jones, Director of Place Making and Physical Development**

*The Government schemes that required match funding that was applied for in 2023 and 2024 are as follows:*

- Clár*
- Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)*
- Town & Village Renewal Scheme*
- Tidy Town Project Scheme*

- *Brexit Adjusted Local Authority Marine Infrastructure (BALAMI)*

There being no other business the meeting concluded.

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

Date: 21/10/24

Cathaoirleach: *Mimi Callan*

Meeting Administrator: *[Signature]*