



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, 28th April 2025, at 10:00a.m.

In Attendance:

Presiding: Councillor, Kevin Callan – Cathaoirleach

Members: Councillors: Marianne Butler (online), James Byrne, Emma Coffey, Bernie Conlon, Eric Donovan, Ciarán Fisher, Anne-Marie Ford, Michelle Hall, Seán Kelly, Rachel Kerley, Sionainn McCann, Debbie McCole, Fiona Mhic Conchoille, Pearse McGeough, Shane McGuinness, Andrea McKeivitt, Paddy McQuillan, Kevin Meenan, Ejiro O’Hare-Stratton, Declan Power, John Reilly, John Sheridan, Jim Tenanty, Antóin Watters, Maeve Yore

Apologies: Councillors: Dolores Minogue, Robert Nash, Pio Smith

Officials: David Conway, Chief Executive
Joe McGuinness, Director of Services
Ger Murphy, Director of Services
David Jones, Director of Services
Thomas McEvoy, Director of Services
Bernie Woods, Director of Finance
Sinéad Dooley, Meeting Administrator
Finbar Gethins, Senior Executive Officer
Helen Divilly, Head of Information Systems
Olivia McCormack, Senior Executive Officer
Joanna Kelly, Senior Planner
John O’Hagan, Senior Engineer
David Hanratty, Senior Engineer
Gavin McLaughlin, Communications Officer
Susan Deery, Administrative Officer
Nikki Campbell, Head of LEO
Rory Sheehan, Climate Action Co-Ordinator
Clare O’Hagan, Senior Staff Officer
Gareth McShane, Assistant Planner

Minute No. 99/25

Minutes of Meeting held on 24th March 2025

The Minutes were:-

Proposed by: Cllr. Maeve Yore
Seconded by: Cllr. Rachel Kerley
And Approved

Minute No. 100/25

Matters Arising

It was noted that while some Local Authorities may be proceeding with establishing Community Safety Partnerships, Louth County Council is awaiting guidance from the Department before making a decision and advancing on the matter.

Minute No. 101/25

Minutes of District Meetings – for noting

- Borough District of Drogheda 3rd March 2025
- Municipal District of Ardee 6th March 2025
- Municipal District of Dundalk 11th March 2025

Minute No. 102/25

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 meeting held on 16th April 2025.

Minute No. 103/25

Strategic Policy Committee Chairpersons Report

Cllr. Kevin Meenan, Chair of the Social Development SPC provided an update from the March meeting.

Minute No. 104/25

Approval of Attendance at Conferences

The list as put to the meeting was:

Proposed by: Cllr. Michelle Hall
Seconded by: Cllr. Emma Coffey
And resolved.

Minute No. 105/25

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. Emma Coffey
Seconded by: Cllr. Maeve Yore
And resolved

Minute No. 106/25

Vacancies on the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee

Director of Services, Ger Murphy advised that there is provision for up to five members on the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee with three already in place. The decision on membership of this committee is a reserved function of the Council under Section 22 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998. It was recommended that Ms. Julie Maguire, Woodland Park be appointed to the Committee.

Proposed by: Cllr. Kevin Meenan
Seconded by: Cllr. Seán Kelly
And resolved

Minute No. 107/25

Annual Financial Statement 2024

Members considered the Annual Financial Statement 2024 as presented to them by Director of Finance, Bernie Woods. Ms Woods provided clarity to Members as required and it was noted that a simple guide and timetable to the Financial Reporting calendar and requirements would be helpful for Members.

The work of the Finance Team was acknowledged and the revised expenditure for the financial year ended 31st December 2024 as set out in Note 16 to the Accounts were subsequently approved.

Proposed by: Cllr. Kevin Callan
Seconded by: Cllr. Emma Coffey
And resolved

The transfers to and from Capital as per the report were also approved.

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

Minute No. 108/25

Audit Committee – Documents for Noting and Approval

As required Under Article 8 of the Local Government (Audit Committee) Regulations 2014, Director of Services, Joe McGuinness presented the Audit Committee Charter 2025 for adoption.

Proposed by: Cllr. Meave Yore
Seconded by: Cllr. Emma Coffey
And adopted.

As required Under Article 9 of the Local Government (Audit Committee) Regulations 2014, Director of Services, Joe McGuinness presented the Audit Committee Work Programme 2025 for adoption.

Proposed by: Cllr. Bernie Conlon
Seconded by: Cllr. Maeve Yore
And adopted.

Director of Services, Joe McGuinness presented updated Audit Committee Standing Orders for noting and advised that the Standing Orders will be published on the website following signoff.

Minute No. 109/25

Amenity Grants 2025

Cllr Kevin Meenan declared a Conflict of Interest and temporarily left the meeting.

In accordance with Section 66 (1) & (9) of the Local Government Act 2001, Director of Services, Joe McGuinness presented the Amenity Grants 2025 for approval.

Proposed by: Cllr. Antóin Watters

Seconded by: Cllr. Maeve Yore

And approved.

Minute No. 110/25

Section 141 Reports 2024 – Compliance with Section 141 of the Local Government Act, 2001 as amended

In accordance with Section 11 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:

- Cllr Seán Kelly reported on the East Border Region for the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025.
- Cllr Seán Kelly reported on An Táin Arts Centre for the period 2024/2025 to date.
- Cllr Paddy McQuillan provided a report on LAMA Executive.
- Cllr Emma Coffey made an amendment to the membership of the BID's committee where members are now Cllr Emma Coffey & Cllr Robert Nash.
- While noting that it was not on the list as circulated, Cllr Shane McGuinness provided a report on Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor.
- Cllr Michelle Hall provided a report on the Droichead Arts Centre

It was noted that the Membership of the BID's committee should be amended to reflect Cllr Nash's position on the committee as opposed to Cllr Reilly.

Minute No. 111/25

Louth Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) Annual Report 2024

As required under the provisions of Section 128B of the Local Government Act 2001, Louth Local Community Development Committee Annual Report 2024 was presented to Members for noting.

Minute No. 112/25

Climate Action Plan Update

Mr. Roy Sheehan, Climate Change Co-Ordinator provided a high-level presentation on year 1 of activity under the Climate Action Plan 2024 - 2029. It was noted that there are 95 actions specific to Louth for delivery under the headings of Governance and Leadership (17), Built Environment and Transport (16), Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure (18), Communities: Resilience and Transition (16), Sustainability and Resource Management (12), Dundalk Blackrock Decarbonising Zone (16). To date 1 action (under Sustainability and Resource Management) has been completed, 49 actions are in progress with 44 due to commence.

While the presentation was high-level in this instance, Mr Sheehan advised that he could provide more detail to Members on any areas of specific interest. He also confirmed that he would be presenting on the tracking of reductions and savings to the Climate Action SPC in May.

It was also noted that:

- An application has been submitted for EU Zone Funding
- Cutting of hedges during this time of year is an offence and should be reported to the Wildlife Ranger (North Louth) and the Biodiversity Officer (South Louth)
- It was queried if the provision of sustainable lighting could be rolled out in all public parks recognising the success of such lighting in Blackrock. It was clarified that the lighting of public parks is not a Climate function but the Team in Climate can provide assistance.
- “No Mow May” is generally accepted as a positive initiative, however, planning is vital to ensure it is applied appropriately in certain public areas such as Graveyards and areas potentially susceptible to dumping if not maintained.
- By mid-2025, it is expected that the Council will have a total of 23 electric vehicles within its fleet, with previously used diesel vehicles de-commissioned
- The Council is currently out to tender for the provision of Solar Panels on 22 public buildings within the county

Minute No. 113/25

Breithniú ar Thuarascálacha ar Chomhréitigh ón bPríomhfheidhmeannach / Consideration of Reports and Recommendations from Chief Executives Monthly Management Report

Support Services

No matters arising.

Strategic Economic Development

The following was highlighted in relation to Strategic Economic Development:

- The final cost of the St Patricks Day trip to New York will become available in the coming weeks.
- The Táin Trail is near finalisation with feedback awaited from 5 Local Authorities before advancing to sign-off. As the lead authority, Louth Counmty Council will appoint an Officer for the trail.
- Seven submissions have been received through the Protected Structures Application process.

- No contact has yet been made with the proprietors of the D Hotel, however, the council is happy to engage in advance of the cessation of their contract in March 2026.
- The Boyne Valley Drive is to be developed in conjunction with Bord Failte and Irelands Ancient East. Stakeholders are working through the specifics of branding and it was noted that the development will require Part 8 approval.
- Works on the development of a new enterprise hub in Drogheda are expected to be completed by end June.
- Work continues with BIDs to make the centre of Drogheda more attractive to businesses.
- With two new fire engines being delivered to Louth, confirmation was received that the older units would be redistributed throughout the County with one unit to be returned to the National Directorate for training purposes.
- It was confirmed that a new Broadband Officer would be taking up position in the coming weeks and will be tasked with looking at the potential for providing public wifi throughout the County.
- The Business Incentive Scheme is currently being reviewed and will be brought to the SPC later in the year.
- Confirmation was received that the Council can only provide maps to homeowners who live outside a flood-plain for mortgage purposes. No letters of indemnity can be provided by the Council.
- Commitment was given to assess the Small Rates Rebate Incentive to streamline the application process.
- The Finance section will assess pay parking issues when paying via the app.
- With reference to calls for St. Peter's Church, Drogheda, to be made a Basilica - Church Authorities to be contacted to determine the process.

Placemaking & Physical Development

The following was noted in relation to Placemaking and Physical Development:

- Confirmation received that the Council is happy to engage with developers in North Drogheda regarding the provision of ESB connections.
- Confirmation was received that St Malachy's National School is included in the Active Travel Scheme.
- A tender process has commenced for the provision of CCTV. It was noted that sanction would be required for every location at which it would be intended to erect/install CCTV.
- The requirement for /provision of bins at St Helena's Park (specifically, the playground), and Mount Avenue, Dundalk to be reviewed.
- Activity is ongoing on the URDF calls for funding with assessing and monitoring being carried out on numerous properties.
- New Estates incorporate, as good practice, the provision of green spaces. However, the issue of no green spaces in older estates was raised with particular reference to needing to ensure the safety of children who currently, with no other option, are playing on roads.
- Road Signs vandalised on the R132 to be investigated.
- Houses at Willamsons Place which are overcrowded, unsafe and derelict are a matter for the Residential Tenancies Board.
- The footpath on the Termonfeckin Road to the cemetery will be completed in conjunction with Phase 2 of the PANCR scheme.
- Water running on the Hill of Rath will be investigated.
- The acquisition of the road at Boyne Business Park is progressing.

- Roads conditions on the R2278, which had previously been repaired were reported as needing substantial works again.
- Flooding issues at Five Oaks in Drogheda were raised for appropriate attention.

Organisational Development

The matters noted in relation to Organisational Development included:

- Acknowledgements were noted on the success of the Civic Reception held on 10th April honouring the sporting achievements of Ms. Eve McCrystal and Ms. Kate O'Connor.
- Agreement was reached to fly the Louth GAA flag on public buildings in the lead up to the Leinster GAA finals.
- Contracts for works to be carried out at Dundalk Athletics Stadium are due to be signed shortly.
- The success of the “homeless street link” project at Quay Celtic Football Club was noted.
- A request for a gate at the lands in Fatima was raised and approved, however, it was also noted that there are numerous access points to these lands which all prove challenging in addressing the issue of scramblers.
- The installation of the sensory space / “cubby” at the County Library was acknowledged and it was noted that subject to the availability of funding, that consideration would be given to further rollout of sensory spaces.
- A Part 8 Application will be required for the upgrade of the training centre at Dundalk Fire Station.
- A request for the provision of a “register of landlords” was received which would identify if a property was tenanted by a Social Housing Tenant, PRTB or Owner Occupier

Social Development

The following was highlighted in relation to Social Development:

- The Council frequently partners with Louth Archaeological Society and has a budget to support such partnerships.
- It was noted that the housing section facilitates ongoing tenant transfers, particularly for people with medical conditions. While the Council had previously looked at the potential for using House Swappers site it was not deemed suitable at that time. Nevertheless, noting that other Local Authorities are using the site, commitment was given to looking at the model again to determine if it could assist with the administration of house transfers.
- No applications have been submitted for the Home Loans Scheme

Minute No. 114/25

Congratulations

Congratulations were extended to the Louth U20 and Senior panels for reaching the Leinster Championship Finals.

Minute No. 115/25

Condolences

A minute's silence was honoured in recognition of the recent passing of Pope Francis.

Condolences were offered to the family and friends of Ms. Marie-Clare Rodgers, Togher, County Louth.

Minute No. 116/25

Notice of Motion: Cllr. Fiona Mhic Conchoille

Seconded: Cllr. Antóin Watters

That Louth County Council will examine the provision of special parking spaces in our county's car parks for individuals with hidden disabilities, similar to existing disability parking spaces. These spaces would be clearly marked with a sunflower symbol and appropriate lining. They are intended as courtesy spaces, relying on the public to respect them and leave them available for individuals with sensory or hidden disabilities. As such, this initiative would not create any additional administrative burden on the council.

Reply: David Jones, Director of Placemaking and Physical Development

While acknowledging the sentiment of the Notice of Motion, it is not proposed to provide any additional parking designations beyond the current statutory provided for Disability parking spaces, which are subject to due regulatory enforcement.

Minute No. 117/25

Notice of Motion: Cllr. Fiona Mhic Conchoille

Seconded: Cllr. Antóin Watters

That Louth County Council erect Lyme Disease information and warning signage, in collaboration with the Lyme Resource Centre, in all public recreational grounds such as parks, playgrounds, cycle paths, and beaches. This signage will inform the public about the dangers of Lyme disease and outline steps to minimise the risk of contracting this chronic illness. Additionally Louth County Councils website should also include relevant information on tick danger / safety, including tips for removal, use of repellents and avoidance strategies.

Note - The Lyme Resource Centre has effective yet unobtrusive outdoor signage displaying a QR code to HSE information available for FREE for public areas so there would be no financial burden involved in this project and the signs are ready to use without delay.

Reply: Joe McGuinness, Director of Organisational Development

The Council do not propose to provide specific signage, but would be happy to promote the need for awareness of this risk on our social media platforms

Minute No. 118/25

Notice of Motion: Cllr. Shane McGuinness

Seconded: Cllr. Kevin Callan

Would this council consider putting a programme of workshops together specifically on planning and development. These workshops would I feel be great preparation for our up-and-coming County Development plan. It would also help the newly elected members have an opportunity in a workshop environment to have greater input with our officials in a collaborative way. Some of the

workshops could also be split via each municipal area also. The outcome of these workshops could also enable us to have a good start made on opinions, priorities and legislative changes in planning prior to having full council meetings on the plan. This plan I believe, is so fundamental for the public, our counties future and we relate back to it for everything we do on a daily basis within our council both as councillors and officials.

Reply: Thomas McEvoy, Director of Strategic Economic Development

As part of the review of the County Development Plan, the Planning Section will hold workshops with Elected Members. A number of workshops were held during the pre-draft stage of the current County Development Plan (2021-2027) and a similar approach will be taken during the forthcoming review process to ensure collaboration with Elected Members. These workshops will include a summary of legislative changes and the development plan process and will provide Elected Members with an opportunity to raise any questions they may have or any particular strategic issues and concerns in advance of the preparation of the Draft Plan. The number of workshops and structure can be determined closer to the time.

Minute No. 119/25

Notice of Motion: Cllr. Eric Donovan

Seconded: Cllr. Kevin Callan

I'm calling on LCC to urgently address the absence of bus stops from Gort Bul to Linenfield, Listoke, Ballymakenny Park area of Drogheda. This is a distance that stops 1.5km short from 1,500 residents who are living in the new housing developments for over 12 months. The infrastructure is there, the NTA and Bus Éireann have agreed to and support the need for a new bus stop but still despite the adequate infrastructure we can't seem to bring it into operation.

In at time where we are trying to promote and encourage public transport this is a very poorly planned service to the public. People are fed up and frustrated by same and is not good enough. Therefore, I am once again calling on the council to implement a bus stop where there is adequate and appropriate facilities to do so for the benefit of 1,500 residents, many of whom depend on public transportation.

Reply: David Jones, Director of Placemaking and Physical Development

The designation of bus stops is a function of the National Transport Authority (NTA), under the provisions of the Public Transport Regulation Act, 2009.

As the Roads Authority, the Council's role is to assess the suitability of bus stop infrastructure from a road safety perspective, as provided for under Section 85 of the Road Traffic Act, 1961 as amended by Section 16 of the Road Traffic Act, 2002.

The Council has liaised with both the NTA and Bus Éireann for the provision of bus infrastructure on the Ballymakenny Road, including as an interim measure, the provision of a temporary inline Bus Stop on each side of the carriageway near the Listoke Avenue, in order to facilitate the extension of the Drogheda D4 bus route.

However, this is ultimately dependent on approval from the NTA, and as such, the Council will continue to engage with the relevant stakeholders on the matter.

Minute No. 120/25

Notice of Question: Cllr James Byrne

"Can Louth County Council provide a progress update on the establishment of the new Local Community Safety Partnership?"

Reply: Joe McGuinness, Director of Organisational Development

The Council are still awaiting the publication of Regulations and Guidance on the matter.

Minute No. 121/25

Correspondence

Members noted the following correspondence:

- Sligo County Council 9th April 2025
- Donegal County Council 10th April 2025
- Leitrim County Council 16th April 2025

Any other Business

Retirement of Director of Services, Joe McGuinness

The forthcoming retirement of Director of Services, Joe McGuinness was noted and Members acknowledged his achievements throughout his tenure with Louth County Council and expressed their appreciation for all his guidance and assistance over the years.

There being no other business, Cllr. Kevin Callan expressed thanks to the Members, staff and press, and the meeting concluded.

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

Date: 19th May 2025

Cathaoirleach: Kevin Callan

Meeting Administrator: Sinead Doolan