



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, 17th February 2025, at 10:00a.m.

In Attendance:

Presiding: Councillor, Kevin Callan – Cathaoirleach

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

Apologies: Councillors: Paddy McQuillan, Pio Smith, Jim Tenanty,

Officials: David Conway, Chief Executive
Ger Murphy, Director of Services
David Jones, Director of Services
Thomas McEvoy, Director of Services
Bernie Woods, Director of Finance
David Hanratty, Senior Engineer
Sinéad Dooley, Meeting Administrator
Finbar Gethins, Senior Executive Officer
Bryan Coughlan, Senior Executive Officer
Helen Divilly, Head of Information Systems
Sabhbh Ní Mhaolagáin, Tourism Officer
Olivia McCormack, Senior Executive Officer
Joanna Kelly, Senior Planner
John O'Hagan, Senior Engineer
Mark Johnston, Senior Engineer
Gavin McLaughlin, Communications Officer

Minute No. 21/25

Minutes of Meeting held on 20th January 2025

Subject to one amendment under Minute No.9/25 (to identify Cllr. Rachel Kerley as the person appointed to fill the vacancy on the Dublin/Belfast Economic Corridor Governance and Oversight Committee as opposed to Cllr. Sean Kelly) the Minutes were:-

Proposed by: Cllr. John Sheridan
Seconded by: Cllr. Andrea McKeivitt
And Approve

Minute No. 22/25

Matters arising

Minute No. 17/25

Cllr. John Reilly advised, on foot of communications with the Revenue Commissioners, that Revenue is available to meet with members of the public on the third Friday of each month at the Citizen's Information Centre, Dundalk. It was suggested that Revenue be invited to a Meeting of the Council to explain the exact nature of the service/s provided.

Proposed by: Cllr. John Reilly
Seconded by: Cllr. Kevin Callan
And resolved.

Minute No. 23/25

Minutes of District Meetings – for noting

- Municipal District of Dundalk – 10th December 2024
- Municipal District of Ardee – 9th January 2025

Minute No. 24/25

Minutes of Committee Meetings – for noting

- Corporate Policy Group – 7th January 2025

Minute No. 25/25

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 4th February 2025.

Minute No. 26/25

Strategic Policy Committee Chairpersons Report

Cllr. Robert Nash, Chair of the Community and Placemaking Strategic Policy Committee provided a report to the meeting. The Committee met on 12th December 2024 and discussed Standing Orders, the role and remit of the Committee, a work programme and dates for its 2025 meetings. The work programme will include matters such as a Review of previously agreed policy - Management of Construction Works in Public Realm, Development of a replacement scheme for the current Litter League, Review of Traffic Calming Policy 2015, Review Parks & Open Spaces Byelaws, Urban Speed Limit By Law Review.

Minute No. 27/25

Approval of Attendance at Conferences

The list as put to the meeting was:

Proposed by: Cllr. Robert Nash
Seconded by: Cllr. Shane McGuinness
And resolved.

Minute No. 28/25

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. Maeve Yore
Seconded by: Cllr. Bernie Conlon
And resolved

Minute No. 29/25

Vacancy on Dundalk Business Improvement District (BIDS) Board

Following the resignation of Cllr. John Reilly from the Dundalk Business Improvement District (BIDS) Board Cllr. Robert Nash was appointed to the vacancy on the

Proposal of: Cllr. John Reilly
Seconded by: Cllr. Seán Kelly
And resolved

Minute No. 30/25

Vacancy on the Creative Spark Board

The matter of appointing a replacement Member to the Creative Spark Board following the resignation of Cllr. Shane McGuinness was deferred to next month's Council meeting.

Minute No. 31/25

Approval of Mutual Exchange on SPC Committee

The mutual exchange of Cllr. Dolores Minogue from the Planning SPC to the Economic Development SPC and Cllr. Ejiro O'Hare Stratton from the Economic Development SPC to the Planning SPC was approved on the:-

Proposal of: Cllr. Robert Nash
Seconded by: Cllr. Maeve Yore
And resolved

Minute No. 32/25

To agree a date for the March Council Meeting

It was agreed that the March Council Meeting would take place Monday 24th at 10am.

Minute No. 33/25

To agree a date for the April Council Meeting

It was agreed that the April Council Meeting would take place Monday 28th at 10am.

Minute No. 34/25

Agree a date for Special Meeting to the Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Dundalk Local Area Plan

It was agreed that a Special Meeting to the Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Dundalk Local Area Plan would take place Friday 28th February at 2.30pm with the option to join remotely.

Minute No. 35/25

Section 141 Reports 2024 - 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) the following reports were given:

- Cllr. Kevin Meenan delivered a report from meetings of the Louth Meath Education Training Board which had met 15th August 2024 (for the Appointment of Board Members), 19th September 2024 (for the Appointment of Chairperson) and 21st November 2024 for normal running order of business).
- Cllr. Ejiro O'Hare Stratton delivered reports from the December 2024 meeting of Drogheda Business Improvement District (BIDS) Board and the Retail Subcommittee meeting of January 6th, 2025.
- Cllr. Anne-Marie Ford spoke to the North-Eastern Regional Drug and Alcohol Taskforce which had met in July, September and November 2024.

Minute No. 36/25

Section 183 – Proposed Disposal of 89 Moneymore, Drogheda, Co. Louth

The proposed disposal of 0.015947 hectares of land at 89 Moneymore, Drogheda, Co. Louth to Connect Family Resource Centre under Article 206 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 was:-

Proposed by: Cllr. Maeve Yore
Seconded by: Cllr. James Byrne
And Resolved

Minute No. 37/25

Section 183 - Proposed Disposal of 171 Moneymore, Drogheda, Co. Louth

The proposed disposal of 0.01726 hectares of land at 171 Moneymore, Drogheda, Co. Louth to Connect Family Resource Centre under Article 206 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 was:-

Proposed by: Cllr. Michelle Hall
Seconded by: Cllr. Debbie McCole
And Resolved

Minute No. 38/25

Notwithstanding Agenda Items No.14 & No.15 and the corresponding Resolutions noted under Minute No. 36/25 and Minute No. 37/25 above, Members subsequently queried why the listed Section 183 Notices had not been issued in hard copy citing the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001. While it was acknowledged that the Notices had been received by all Members electronically, concerns remained in respect of the proper administration of statutory obligations in this instance. In order to afford relevant personnel the opportunity to consider the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 it was determined that all Section 183 matters as listed on the Agenda be deferred to next month's Council meeting.

Minute No. 39/25

Section 183 - Proposed Disposal of Moneymore Childcare Centre, Roches Lane, Moneymore, Drogheda, Co. Louth

As per Minute No. 38/25 – Consideration deferred.

Minute No. 40/25

Section 183 - Proposed Disposal of lands at Ecco Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth

As per Minute No. 38/25 – Consideration deferred.

Minute No. 41/25

Consideration of Reports and Recommendations from Chief Executives Monthly Management Report

In presenting the Monthly Management Report, Chief Executive David Conway took the opportunity to highlight, as detailed in the January Report, Louth County Council's response to Storm Éowyn.

He advised that following the collation of information garnered from an internal debriefing session that arrangements will be made for a debriefing session with Elected Members.

Support Services

- No matters raised.

Strategic Economic Development

The following was highlighted in relation to Strategic Economic Development:

- The Chief Executive in addition to Councillors Callan, Kelly, Sheridan and Smith, will be travelling to New York in advance of St Patrick's Day. Costings in respect of same will be circulated following the trip.
- Louth County Council has a 'Business Incentive Scheme' to induce businesses to occupy premises which have been vacant for over two years in key urban centres. The scheme is being reviewed by the SPC for Economic Development in the context of revised legislation allowing for rates waivers.
- Drogheda's Night-Time Economy Adviser will be invited to present at the next meeting of Borough District of Drogheda.
- The Government is in the process of reviewing the National Planning Framework (NPF).
- Members raised concerns in respect to the considerations given to the availability and capacity of infrastructures, such as roads, schools, childcare etc., to support the ongoing delivery of housing. Director of Services, Thomas McEvoy advised that no planning was being approved without ensuring that the capacity was there to support the development.
- Policies on campsites could be explored under the review of the County Development Plan due to commence in Q4 this year.
- It was confirmed that the Heritage Officer has engaged with the owner of St John's Well. The building is in private ownership and not a protected structure. As a Recorded Monument, any intervention must be with the agreement of the National Monument Service.

Placemaking & Physical Development

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

- €11m in funding has been allocated by the Department of Transport for Louth County Council's Road Works Programme 2025. It was noted that once off grants provided in 2024 would not be repeated in 2025, specifically the provision in 2024 of €1m for the North Louth Emergency Road Restoration Programme (flood affected roads) and funding towards the restoration of the Obelisk Bridge which was completed in 2024. An increase was provided for the expansion of the Work Programme in respect of resurfacing and restoration. Proposals in respect of the 2025 Work Programme will be brought to the respective Borough & Municipal District March meetings.
- Communications will be provided in respect of Drone Surveys to be conducted as part of the Carlingford and Greenore Flood Relief Scheme.
- Consultants are currently compiling a report on the submissions received in response to the public consultation on the proposed Dundalk Bay to Carlingford Greenway project. This report to be issued shortly, and a briefing for the Dundalk MD members will be arranged in advance of publication.
- Louth County Council is receptive to updating its existing Tree Policy and confirmed that while it has no responsibility for trees on private lands a Section 70 Notice can be issued to landowners advising of their responsibility for trees on their lands that are deemed to be dangerous.

Organisational Development

The matters noted in relation to Organisational Development included:

- The deployment of CCTV is progressing slowly and considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Louth County Council has no regulatory function in respect of addressing Japanese Knotweed, but it will be considered within the context of an Action Plan for Biodiversity which is currently being devised.
- Louth County Council continues to expand its fleet of electric vehicles with a total of 9 currently on hand and a further 8 ordered, expected to arrive later in the month.
- 90 applications for a 'Certificate of Exemption' for XL Bully dogs were received prior to 1st February 2025. 40 Certificates of Exemption were issued while others required clarifications. To date, no refusals have been made.
- It was noted that there had been no regular engagement with policing committees in some time and that previously it had been an area of good partnership. It was suggested that arrangements should be made, through the respective Borough & Municipal Districts, to convene a meeting.

Social Development

The following was highlighted in relation to Social Development:

- Uptake of the Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan (LAPR) scheme is low both at a local and national level.
- Louth County Council is in the process of compiling a 'Land Bank' of sites which may be considered for the development of Social/Affordable Housing. The delivery of Social/Affordable Housing remains a national priority.
- It was confirmed that to avail of the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) that tenancies should be registered with the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB). Louth County Council is supporting the RTB in its Communications Plan in respect of registration compliance.
- Review of rent pressure zones and associated potential issues were noted.
- The Part VIII for the proposed Dundalk Women's Aid scheme will be presented for consideration at next month's meeting of the Municipal District of Dundalk.

Minute No. 42/25

On the **Proposal** of Cllr. Kevin Callan, **Seconded** by Cllr. Michelle Hall, Standing Orders were suspended to allow the presentation on the Narrow Water Bridge development.

Minute No. 43/25

Narrow Water Bridge Presentation

John O'Hagan, Senior Engineer, provided a presentation to Members on the Narrow Water Bridge development and addressed questions arising. The following matters were highlighted:

- It is a three-and-a-half-year long project, currently over a quarter way through its work programme and on track for completion by Q4 2027.
- Funding for its completion is guaranteed.

- While the bridge will be fully automated two staff will be required on site for the purpose of ensuring public safety.
- It is intended that the operation of the bridge will be administered from the South with financial support provided from the North.

Minute No. 44/25

Notice of Motion: Cllr. Fiona Mhic Conchoille

Seconded: Cllr. Kevin Callan

That this Council erect signage (in conjunction with Seal Rescue Ireland) to raise awareness of seals and seal pups, along the beaches in Louth and Carlingford Lough. Seal Rescue Ireland operates solely on fundraising, donations and sponsorships, with government grants covering a mere 5% of its total operating costs. This signage is essential to the protection and awareness of our seal population.

Reply from Joe McGuinness, Director of Organisational Development

The Council will review this matter and have commenced communication with the National Parks and Wildlife Service on the merits of this proposal and any proposal will be developed in consultation with Seal Rescue Ireland.

Minute No. 45/25

Notice of Motion: Cllr. Fiona Mhic Conchoille

Seconded: Cllr. Antóin Watters

This council, in partnership with the Road Safety Authority (RSA), will launch a pilot scheme to install Hi-Vis Deposit Boxes at select public buildings and sporting venues in rural areas. This initiative aims to provide easy access to high-visibility vests for the public while walking or cycling. Local Community Alert Groups, in collaboration with other community organisations will oversee the management of these deposit boxes. If the scheme proves successful, it could be expanded county-wide.

Reply from David Jones, Director of Place Making and Physical Development

Louth County Council is committed to promoting safe road use, which represents a key theme within our current Road Safety Action Plan 2023-2024.

Requests for Hi-Vis items can be made from individuals or groups directly to the RSA via the RSA website.

It is noted that the RSA may have limited supplies of Hi-Vis materials and may limit stock disbursements on a monthly basis so as to maintain and manage their supplies.

During 2025, the Council will be developing its second Road safety Action Plan for the period 2025-2027, and initiatives aimed at promoting safe road use can be considered for inclusion in same as part of the plan formulation process.

Minute No. 46/25

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

In light of our recent meeting to discuss the aftermath of the storm, it is clear that concerns regarding tree safety and management were raised by several councillors even before the storm occurred. I propose that we work together to develop a comprehensive policy that addresses these concerns, ensuring that we, as councillors, can effectively support and protect our community members in the future.

Reply from David Jones, Director of Place Making and Physical Development

Louth County Council is responsible for the management of trees on Council land, including streets, parks and open spaces, and is committed to ensuring a proactive good practice approach to tree management, including periodic surveys by a qualified arborist, and subsequent programme of works (pruning/felling) where identified. Decisions for tree pruning requirements are based on best arboricultural practice and balanced against the availability of resources. Works to deal with immediate health and safety issues are treated as a priority and matched with an appropriate level of works.

Maintenance of trees on private lands, including roadside trees and hedgerows, is the responsibility of the property owner, who has a duty of care for same under the Road Act 2007.

The Council will use its powers, where justified, under the Road Act 1993 to enforce the owners of imminently dangerous trees to take action to remove the hazard (Section 70 Notice). Where no action is taken, the Council may use its powers to carry out the works directly and seek to recover the costs of the works. Annually, awareness through local media in promoting the responsibility of property owners in this regard is undertaken by the Council.

The development of a Tree Management Policy to capture the various aspects to tree management as alluded to above, would be beneficial, and in capturing the role trees play in climate mitigation and adaptation as well as building resilience in biodiversity.

Minute No. 47/25

Notice of Motion: Cllr. Dolores Minogue
Seconded by: Cllr. Maeve Yore

That this government appoint a Commissioner for the Elderly to oversee and address the needs, welfare and concerns of our senior population. The Commissioner will serve as a dedicated advocate, ensuring the elderly have access to necessary resources, services and support. This role will include, but is not limited to, collaborating with local organisations, identifying gaps in services and working to enhance quality of life for elderly citizens throughout the county.

Reply from Joe McGuinness, Director of Organisational Development

This is a matter for the Members.

Minute No. 48/25

Notice of Motion: Cllr. John Sheridan
Seconded by: Cllr. Maeve Yore

That Louth County Council is deeply concerned that funding for the Mid-Louth Youth Service is due to cease on April 30, 2025, which at this point means the closure of the service. Following a presentation to Councillors and TDs in January, the Council fully endorses the great work done by the services since 2017.

That the Council will write to Minister Helen McEntee, Minister for Education and Youth seeking that her department secure multi annual funding for the service in order to provide stability to the service, its participants and staff.

Reply from Joe McGuinness, Director of Organisational Development

This is a matter for the Members.

Minute No. 49/25

Correspondence

Members noted the following correspondence:

- Clare County Council 15th January 2025
- Clare County Council 15th January 2025
- Leitrim County Council 15th January 2025

Minute No. 50/25

Any other Business

Cllr. Declan Power provided an update on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC) and advised that the DBEC Summit will take place Thursday, 27th February.

Congratulations

Congratulations were extended to Cllr McCann on her recent engagement.

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:

24th March '25

Cathaoirleach:

Kevin Callan

Meeting Administrator:

Sinead Dooley