

Minutes of the Planning and Support Infrastructure Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held in person in the Council Chamber, County Hall and on Teams on the 1st July 2025 at 4p.m.

In Attendance

Cllr Rachel Kerley	Louth County Council -Chairperson
Cllr Ciaran Fisher	Louth County Council
Cllr Ejiro O’Hare Stratton	Louth County Council
Anthony McArdle	Community and Voluntary Pillar
Vincent Matthews	Development and Construction Interest
Jennifer Owens	Youth Work Ireland

Officials

Turlough King	Acting Senior Planner
Frances Hodgers	Staff Officer

Apologies

Cllr Antoin Watters	Louth County Council
Cllr Bernie Conlon	Louth County Council
Cllr Emma Coffey	Louth County Council
Thomas McEvoy	Director of Service
John O’Hagan	Executive Engineer
William Walsh	Senior Executive Officer

Absent

Pat McCormack	Business & Commercial Interest
Kevin Sweeny	Agriculture and Farming Interest

Cllr Kerley opened the meeting, and all present introduced themselves.

1. Minutes of Meeting dated 12th December 2024

The minutes were again unable to be adopted due to insufficient persons from the 12th December meeting being present. It was agreed that this could possibly be done by email and reported at next meeting

Minutes of Meeting dated 3rd March 2025

Proposed: Cllr Kerley. Seconded: Cllr O’Hare Stratton. Adopted.

2. Matters Arising

Ratification of Ms. Jennifer Owens, Youth Work Ireland- Agreed.

3. Discussion on Town Centre Regeneration and Lower Order Retail Uses

Cllr Kerley opened the discussion for suggestions on what the group would like to include on the Programme of Works 2025. A discussion followed on dereliction in the Urban Centres, and how to manage same. Cllr Fisher spoke about the signage problem prevalent in vape shops and barbershops, and a general discussion ensued around this issue. It was mooted that the Shopfront Policy could be tightened up to focus on this. A suggestion was made that the Council could advise the style and colours required for the signs, for a coherent and aesthetic look, and to avoid neon and flashing lights. It was agreed that this is a matter that the SPC can look into.

Anthony McArdle suggested if the shopfront policy is updated Dundalk could be used as a pilot for the implementation of the policy. He also highlighted Bridge Street as an example of recent success in the rejuvenation of vacant and under-utilised properties.

Cllr O'Hare Stratton said that she feels that required Infrastructure and Amenities are not put into place before planning permission is granted, and that more emphasis should be made on space for community groups. Ms Owens agreed that more space was needed for voluntary groups, and attendees, and this could help to avoid anti-social behaviour. Turlough enquired what size spaces would be required, and if this information was available it could be used in a social and community audit to be prepared as part of the County Development Plan.

A discussion was had regarding the difficulty of keeping the town centres vibrant, due to the high cost of rents for shop-owners and the prevalence of internet shopping putting some shops out of business. There was also a discussion around the number of vape shops in the town, how this can be regulated and the potential public health impacts around the prevalence of these shops in the town, particularly for young people.

The number of Derelict Sites within the Urban Area arose again, and Turlough King advised of the delays caused by difficulties in identifying owners and their addresses, serving Notices and slow Court proceedings. Questions were raised about what Louth County Council was doing about Derelict Properties owned by LCC, also about why more Compulsory Purchase Orders were not being sought as this was a successful mechanism in the past for bringing building back into use.

There was a query if there would be an opportunity for part of any derelict properties being purchased under the URDF Fund to be retained for community uses. Turlough agreed he would follow up on this.

A decision was made that the Shopfront Policy would be circulated and the SPC in the immediate term would focus on reviewing/updating this policy and an updated version of same could be incorporated into the forthcoming County Development Plan.

Date: **adopted 3rd November 2025**

Chairperson:

Rachel Kerley

Meeting Administrator:

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