



Comhairle Contae Lú
Louth County Council

Cruinniú Míósúil Chomhairle Contae Lú **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, 23rd March 2026, at 10:00a.m.

In Attendance:

Presiding: Councillor Seán Kelly – Cathaoirleach

Members: Councillors: Marianne Butler, James Byrne, Kevin Callan, Emma Coffey, Bernie Conlon, Eric Donovan, Ciarán Fisher, Anne-Marie Ford, Rachel Kerley, Sionainn McCann, Debbie McCole, Pearse McGeough, Shane McGuinness, Andrea McKevitt, Paddy McQuillan, Fiona MhicConchoille, Kevin Meenan, Dolores Minogue, Robert Nash, Declan Power, John Reilly, John Sheridan, Pío Smith, Jim Tenanty, Antóin Watters (online), Maeve Yore

Apologies: Councillors: Michelle Hall, Ejiro O'Hare Stratton

Officials: David Conway, Chief Executive
Joanna Kelly, Acting Director of Services
Bernadette Woods, Director of Finance
David Hanratty, Acting Director of Services
David Jones, Director of Services
Ger Murphy, Director of Services
Olivia McCormack, Acting Director of Services
Sinéad Dooley, Meetings Administrator
Susan Deery, Administrative Officer
Helen Divilly, Head of Information Systems
Gavin McLaughlin, Communications Officer
Turlough King, Acting Senior Planner
Anthony O'Donohue, Senior Executive Officer
Amanda Branigan, County Librarian
Colette Moss, Senior Executive Officer
John O'Hagan, Senior Engineer
Nikki Campbell, Head of LEO
Mark Johnston, Senior Engineer
Finbar Gethins, Senior Executive Officer
Bryan Coughlan, Senior Executive Officer
Rory Sheehan, Climate Action Officer
Denise McShane, Clerical Officer
Siobhan Brannigan, Clerical Officer
Rosemary Gallagher, Staff Officer
Edel Murphy, Clerical Officer
Gail Morgan, Staff Officer (online)
Liam McStravick, Clerical Officer

Minute No. 50/26

Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 16th February 2026

The Minutes were:-

Proposed by: Cllr. Maeve Yore
Seconded by: Cllr. Andrea McKeivitt
And Approved.

Minute No. 51/26

Matters Arising

- Cllr. McGeough requested that the February Minutes be amended to record that he had asked that the Council write to Inland Fisheries Ireland and the Office of Public Works seeking a meeting to discuss the ongoing silting of local rivers. It is also noted from contemporaneous written notes, not previously reflected in the Minutes, that the Cathaoirleach requested Cllr. McGeough and Cllr. Ford to submit a proposal to inform the content of the requested correspondence.
- Cllr. Power requested that relevant documents be updated to reflect his appointment to the Local Sports Partnership Committee.

Minute No. 52/26

Minutes of District Meetings – for noting

- Municipal District of Ardee 4th December 2025
- Municipal District of Ardee 8th January 2026
- Borough District of Drogheda 5th January 2026
- Municipal District of Dundalk 13th February 2026
- Municipal District of Ardee 5th February 2026
- Borough District of Drogheda 9th February 2026
- Municipal District of Dundalk 10th February 2026
- Borough District of Drogheda Special Meeting 16th February 2026

Minute No. 53/26

Minutes of Committee Meetings – for noting

- Corporate Policy Group 5th February 2026

Minute No. 54/26

Report from Chairperson of Corporate Policy Group

A report was delivered by An Cathaoirleach Seán Kelly on proceedings from the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 5th March 2026.

Minute No. 55/26

Strategic Policy Committee Chairpersons Report

Cllr. Robert Nash provided an update from the March meeting of the Strategic Policy Committee for Community and Placemaking.

Cllr. John Sheridan provided an update from the February meeting of the Strategic Policy Committee for Climate Action and Sustainable Development.

Minute No. 56/26

Approval of Attendance at Conferences and Training Events

The list as put to the meeting was:-

Proposed by: Cllr. Kevin Callan
Seconded by: Cllr. Andrea McKeivitt
And Resolved.

Minute No. 57/26

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 was:

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

Minute No. 58/26

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, 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).

- Cllr. Power reported on the Local Sports Partnership meeting which took place on 4th March 2026.
- Cllr. Power reported on the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor meeting which took place on 4th December 2025.

Minute No. 59/26

Report on reports submitted to the Cathaoirleach under Section 142 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended.

No reports were presented.

Minute No. 60/26

Annual Service Delivery Plan 2026

Chief Executive, David Conway presented the 2026 Service Delivery Plan, prepared in accordance with Section 134(a) of the Local Government Act 2001 as inserted by section 50 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014.

He highlighted the Council's commitment to the delivery of high-quality services and to building on the achievements of the previous year. He advised that the Plan sets out clear objectives and intended outcomes for 2026 and noted that feedback received as part of the 2025 end-of-year review of the Service Delivery Plan, particularly in relation to the Climate Action Plan and Green Procurement, had been taken into account in its preparation. He further noted that progress against objectives will be reviewed at 6 and 12 month intervals during 2026.

Members expressed their appreciation to management and staff for the preparation of the Plan and acknowledged the high standard of service provision evidenced therein. They further noted the comprehensive and detailed nature of the document, encouraged all Councillors to give due consideration to its contents, and formally conveyed their congratulations to those involved in its development.

The Annual Service Delivery Plan 2026 was:

Proposed by: Cllr. Maeve Yore
Seconded by: Cllr. Kevin Callan
And Approved.

Minute No. 61/26

S183 – Proposed Disposal of the ground floor offices at Drogheda Civic Offices, Fair Street, Drogheda, Co. Louth

The proposed disposal of the ground floor offices at Drogheda Civic Offices, Fair Street, Drogheda was:

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

Minute No. 62/26

S183 – Proposed Disposal of the property at 3 Mill Lane, Drogheda, Co. Louth

The proposed disposal of the property at 3 Mill Lane, Drogheda, Co. Louth was:

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

Minute No. 63/26

Arts Grant Funding Awards for 20126 – For Noting

Director of Services, Ger Murphy, presented for noting, in accordance with Section 6 of the Arts Act 2003, details of the twenty-six successful applicants for this year's Arts Grants.

Minute No. 64/26

Update for 2025 on the progress of the Louth Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

Climate Action Officer, Rory Sheehan, presented to the Members on the progress of the Louth Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029, providing an update on actions completed and underway during 2025. The update summarised overall progress against the 94 Louth-specific actions across governance, built environment, natural environment, community engagement, sustainability and the Dundalk–Blackrock Decarbonising Zone.

Members welcomed the update and praised the Climate Action Team for the strong progress to date and, in particular, for achieving zero delayed actions in 2025.

During the discussion, Members raised a number of matters and observations:

- In the context of increasing global instability, Members stressed the importance of future-proofing Council services, doing more now to ensure readiness for emerging and unpredictable challenges.
- Stakeholder engagement will continue on the development of a Fire Management Plan for the Cooley Mountains, with Members acknowledging the importance of coordinated inter-agency work in this area.
- Members discussed topics including Green Procurement, Voluntary Decarbonisation, and the emerging National EV Charging Strategy, and noted the relevance of each to the Council's wider climate objectives.
- The Executive confirmed that it will explore options for transitioning Civil Defence vehicles to electric models, in consultation with the Department of Defence.
- Training on Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) has been delivered, and funding applications for further initiatives have been submitted.
- Consultants' drawings for the Rampart Rejuvenation Project are currently under assessment by the Flood Relief Section.
- Concerns were raised regarding the potential impacts of the ongoing war on future planned works, including the Road Works Programme, due to anticipated increases in costs and possible shortages of construction materials.
- Members reiterated ongoing concerns around coastal protection and erosion, noting that two flood relief projects are currently underway. The meeting was advised that further departmental guidance is expected in due course, along with the appointment of a dedicated coastal officer.
- Members suggested expanding the provision of Mobility Hubs to areas beyond Dundalk to enhance sustainable travel options countywide.

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

Finance and System Support

No issues were highlighted in relation to Finance and System Support.

Economic Delivery

The following was noted in relation to Economic Delivery:

- A future review of the Festivals Grant budget will consider increasing funding to support additional tourism events.
- Members will receive further information on the Shop Front Grant Scheme, including proposals to increase grant levels.
- The options paper on Brigid's Way remains at an early stage, with development works planned for the summer months.
- Members proposed extending the Night-time Economy Project beyond Drogheda.
- The OPW will be contacted regarding the scaffolding and long-term works underway at Roche Castle.
- Tourism signage for St. Brigid and Faughart in North Louth will be examined.
- Broadband works at Cooley Kickhams Club will be investigated.
- Engagement with the Department will begin regarding future plans for the D Hotel, Drogheda, with a view to supporting tourism accommodation.
- Ownership of the High Cross Monument at Monasterboice will be established to determine responsibility for future preservation works.

Operations and Environment Delivery

The following was noted in relation to Operations and Environment Delivery:

- Members reviewed proposed Bus Shelter locations and were advised to submit any further suggestions to the Operations Section. A referral will also issue to Bus Éireann regarding safety concerns in Dunleer.
- Bathing Water sample results submitted to the EPA will be circulated once approved.
- Clarification was requested on whether a contractor has been appointed, or is being appointed, for the Dromiskin Sustainable Energy Communities Project.
- Issues under the Rural Water Private Well Grant Scheme are the responsibility of Uisce Éireann.
- Provision of CCTV in Dundalk town remains a matter for An Garda Síochána.
- A live enforcement case on illegal dumping is underway, with continued scoping of covert CCTV at litter hotspots.
- The Litter Team will examine issues with businesses leaving bins out after collection day, including whether the Litter Bye Laws need review.
- Members will receive details of the ten vacant casual trading locations.
- Additional dog-fouling foot patrols, beyond the Dromiskin area, will be encouraged.
- Members will be provided with the number of housing estates in each District to be targeted under future MyWaste Regulations.

HR, Corporate and Community Delivery

The following was highlighted in relation to HR, Corporate and Community Delivery:

- Louth County Council and Blackrock Tidy Towns will host an Entente Florale Europe public information night on Thursday, 16 April 2026, at 7:30 p.m. in Haggardstown Community Centre to outline Blackrock's entry and the associated community preparation.
- A review of the Gaeltacht Scholarship Scheme for 2027 will take place following the strong response to the 2026 scheme, which received over 300 applications for 15 awards of €300.
- A review will be undertaken regarding the unavailability of previous Council meeting minutes on the website to ensure all links are functioning correctly.
- Members will be provided with details of community centres and venues that may be used during power outages and severe weather events.

Housing and Culture Delivery

The following was highlighted in relation to Housing and Culture Delivery:

- The Council continues to prioritise rent arrears, with strengthened procedures, additional resources, and systematic reporting to the Management Team and Housing SPC. Interim rent reviews are being explored to help prevent arrears among social housing tenants.
- Consideration will be given to how further details on the Tenant in Situ scheme, including acquisitions and budgeting, could be reflected in future Chief Executive's Reports.
- Targets for the Affordable Housing Scheme 2025–2030 will be released through the Delivery Homes and Building Communities Housing Delivery Action Plan process.
- The Draft Estate Management Plan is in development, with tenant and councillor engagement to follow.
- Details of the 2026 Local Authority Home Loan Scheme allocation will be provided to members.
- Information on the proposed housing delivery reward for local authorities will be sought from the Department and shared with Members.
- Lands on the Inner Relief Road beside Creative Spark will be examined for potential future social housing development.
- Consideration will be given on how best to provide more details in the Chief Executive's Reports on recorded re-lets.

Major Capital Projects and Infrastructure Delivery

The following was highlighted in relation to Major Capital Projects and Infrastructure Delivery:

- The €4m allocation for Active Travel projects is not a rolling fund. The Executive has met with the National Transport Authority to agree the pathway forward, and further updates will be provided to Members through future Chief Executive's Reports. Marleys Lane and the Xerox Junction remain the priority projects.
- A detailed decision on the proposed use of the €800k Flood Relief funding will be announced in due course and will align with upcoming Public Realm Schemes.

Minute No. 66/26

Notice of Motion: Cllr. Robert Nash

Seconded: Cllr. Rachel Kerley

Motion: Cllr. Robert Nash

"Calling on Louth County Council to consider and introduce the following actions regarding vaping retail shops:

- 1. To restrict the use of bright neon signs, cartoon graphics and products aimed at children or other product imagery on the exterior of vaping retail shops.*
- 2. Mandate that all vape shop windows be covered or display only neutral signage in line with tobacco product restrictions.*

3. *Introduce guidelines for plain storefront designs (e.g. black and white lettering, no product advertising).*
4. *Mandate that vaping products be kept out of view in retail outlets, e.g.: when behind the counter or in closed containers”.*

Reply: T. McEvoy, Director of Economic Delivery

The County Development Plan recognises that the character and perception of streets and town and village centres can be determined by the signage in the area and in this regard the Plan promotes high quality shopfronts and signage. The Council has published Shopfront Design Guidelines against which proposals for new signage are assessed. Any lighting or illumination on signage should generally be discreet. The Planning Enforcement Team carry out periodic reviews of signage in the central areas of the larger settlements, with any unauthorised signage investigated and pursued.

The Planning and Support Infrastructure Strategic Policy Committee is currently reviewing the Shopfront Guidelines. Any future update could include specific reference to signage for Vape Shops.

With regard to advertisements in windows the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) include an exemption for advertisements in the windows of shops. Vape Shops can avail of this exemption as they come within the definition of a shop. There are no restrictions on the colour or extent of illumination for window displays in the exemptions in the Planning and Development Regulations for shops therefore the Council cannot require Vape Shops to install neutral signage in windows under the Planning legislation.

The storage of vaping products is an issue that would be required to be addressed under public health legislation. The government has recently approved the publication of the Public Health (Tobacco Products and Nicotine Inhaling Products) (Amendment) Bill 2026. This Bill when enacted will reduce the appeal, visibility and accessibility of vaping products.

Minute No. 67/26

Suspension of Standing Orders

In accordance with Standing Order Number 89, the Standing Orders were suspended to allow for the conclusion of business on the agenda.

Proposal of: Cllr. Andrea McKeivitt
Seconded by: Cllr. Pio Smith
And Resolved

Minute No. 68/26

Notice of Motion: Cllr. Maeve Yore
Seconded: Cllr. Bernie Conlon

That Louth County Council (LCC) introduce a text alert/ helpline number system for public to report illegal parking in disabled bays throughout our County so that Traffic Wardens can be alerted and issue warnings and tickets to eliminate repeat offenders.

Reply: B. Woods, Director of Finance and System Support

Members of the public who wish to report incidents of illegal parking in disabled bays can do so by contacting our Customer Services team. Customer Services will then refer the matter directly to the Traffic Section, who can arrange for a Traffic Warden to investigate and take appropriate action. As a future development, the possibility of enabling reports of illegal parking through our new Customer

Relationship Management (CRM) system is being examined as part of the rollout of the system to the public.

Discussion

Cllr. Yore stated that she did not accept the initial part of the response provided citing Fingal, Cavan and Clare as examples of Local Authorities having implemented a text alert system. Members expressed broad support for the Motion, which Cllr Yore requested be revisited.

Minute No. 69/26

Notice of Motion: Cllr. Ciaran Fisher
Seconded: Cllr. Declan Power

I propose that Louth County Council:

- 1. Notes with concern the ongoing proliferation of vape shops in our town centres, which is resulting in retail saturation, a reduction in economic diversity, a decline in the vitality, pull, and dwell factors of our streetscapes, and heightened public health risks—particularly for young people exposed to vaping products in proximity to schools and residential areas.*
- 2. Recognises the limitations under the current Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended): these businesses are classified as general retail uses, which severely restricts the Council's ability to require planning permission for changes of use, to refuse applications on grounds of community needs, oversupply, suitability, density, or location, or to impose conditions aligned with local development plan objectives for vibrant, mixed-use town centres.*
- 3. Resolves to write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Office of the Planning Regulator, and any other relevant planning authorities, urging the following amendments to the Planning and Development Regulations and associated guidelines: o The establishment of a distinct use class for vape shops and comparable premises, treating any change of use to this category as a material change requiring full planning permission—similar to the controls already in place for off-licences and betting offices.*

The granting of explicit powers to local authorities to refuse planning applications for such uses where they would lead to over-concentration, based on factors including density thresholds, suitability for the location, public health impacts, and the need to maintain a balanced retail mix that supports economic diversity and urban regeneration. The introduction of mechanisms to enable the phasing out, relocation, or restriction of existing such premises in sensitive or unsuitable areas (e.g., high streets, near schools, or areas of high residential density), including through development plan policies, supplementary planning guidance, or transitional arrangements to protect community well-being.

- 4. Circulate a copy of this motion to other local authorities for their consideration and support.*

Reply: T. McEvoy, Director of Economic Delivery

The increasing number of Vape Shops in town centres is acknowledged.

The Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) enables shops to benefit from a wide range of exemptions due to the definition of a “shop” whereby they can change from one use to another without requiring planning permission. Vape shops benefit from these exemptions as they fall within the definition of a “shop” as their use involves the “retail sale of goods”.

The Council would support any amendments to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) that would exclude Vape Shops from the definition of a shop thus giving Local Authorities greater control over where they can be located.

The current County Development Plan recognises the need to provide for a suitable mix of uses in town centres and to protect the vitality and viability of the retail core. Sections 5.2.1 and 13.14.6 set out criteria for assessing planning applications for Lower Order Retailing, which includes vape shops. This is only relevant for any proposals that require planning permission.

As part of the County Development Plan Review there will be an opportunity to update or amend the policy framework in relation to Lower Order Retailing.

Minute No. 70/26

Notice of Motion: Cllr. Pio Smith
Seconded: Cllr. Maeve Yore

Disability Employment Targets - That this Council:

- 1. Notes that people with disabilities remain under-represented in public sector employment;*
- 2. Affirms that the current 6% disability employment figure should be treated as a minimum baseline, and that retaining this level until 2030 lacks ambition;*
- 3. Agrees, subject to lawful recruitment processes, to work towards aspirational targets of 8% disability employment by 2027 and 10% by 2030;*
- 4. Requests the Chief Executive to prepare and publish a Disability Employment Implementation Plan, including improved consistency in reporting and timely publication of the Council's National Disability Authority return (Part 5) in Q1 of each year;*
- 5. Directs that this motion be forwarded to the relevant Government Ministers, the National Disability Authority, and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.*

Reply: Joanna Kelly, A/Director of HR, Corporate and Community Delivery

The observation that people with disabilities remain under-represented in public sector employment is noted. The Council continues to promote an inclusive and accessible workplace as per our corporate values and remains committed to supporting staff and candidates with disabilities.

Local Authorities are required to submit their annual Part 5 return to their Departmental Monitoring Committee by 31st March each year with the National Disability Authority subsequently reviewing and publishing the consolidated public sector results. Management will continue to ensure full compliance with these requirements.

The National Disability Authority's 2024 Part 5 Report on Compliance records Louth County Council as having 9.4% of employees reporting a disability, significantly above the statutory baseline and the national average across the sector of 6%.

Members are advised that all staffing, recruitment, appointment and workforce planning functions are executive functions of the Chief Executive, under Sections 159 and 161 of the Local Government Act 2001. Accordingly, Elected Members may not set binding staffing targets or direct recruitment outcomes.

The Council engaged with the WAM (Willing Able Mentoring) Programme in 2025 and will continue this participation into 2026. The Council is currently in the recruitment phase of the programme. This initiative forms part of a wider set of actions designed to strengthen inclusive employment pathways within the organisation.

Minute No. 71/26

Notice of Motion: Cllr. Marianne Butler
Seconded: Cllr. Maeve Yore

That Louth County Council prepare a phased and detailed plan for the continued tackling of the remaining cohort of estates to be taken in charge in the county. I am requesting that this plan be prepared and published in order to give certainty to homeowners living in estates that have not been taking in charge, particularly those in estates that need significant remedial work. The plan should include timelines for site resolution plans to be completed and for works to be completed to bring housing estates up to taking in charge standard.

Reply: T. McEvoy, Director of Economic Delivery

The Compliance and Land Activation Unit is currently working to a programme to bring estates for which a Taking-in-Charge (TIC) application has been made to a satisfactory standard for Taking in Charge by Louth County Council. The current work programme is set out under the following three categories.

- 1. Developer-led housing developments where there is a bond held by the Council, with the objective of bringing the estate to TIC standard in advance of LCC repaying the bond. TIC is actively working with twenty six developers to ensure their work programmes meet TIC standards.*
- 2. Unfinished developments with no developer (i.e. liquidation/ death) but where there is a bond held by LCC. TIC is advancing on four housing developments in this category.*
- 3. Unfinished developments where there has been an application or plebiscite to Take-in- Charge, but where there is no bond (forty five developments). These forty-five developments have been ranked in order of priority to comply with Taking in Charge Legislation (Section 11 of the Roads Act) and in accordance with the recommendations of the Office of the Planning Regulator on foot of their review of the Taking in Charge function in Louth County Council in 2022.*

A review incorporating a phased and detailed plan for the continued tackling of the remaining cohort of estates to be taken in charge in the county was initially conducted in 2023 and was reviewed again in 2025.

The 45no. outstanding developments have been reviewed and scored based on; age of application, impact on number of residents, environmental and safety concerns, impact on future development and monies recoupable. These are listed in order of priority.

Taking in Charge Review 2023

Following the 2023 TIC exercise, 9no. priority projects were identified and a supplementary budget was allocated towards the completion of these developments. These are all either complete or near finalisation with completion due imminently. The status of each estate in this priority list is regularly updated by the TIC coordinator. Some of the budget allocated is recoupable from Uisce Éireann in respect of works to water and waste water infrastructure.

Taking in Charge Review 2025

The TIC section has identified a further 8no. priority sites in the county (all of which have no or inadequate associated bond) using the defined priority methodology. Estimates have been prepared on the cost of works required to bring these priority estates to TIC standard and a budget allocated accordingly. Some of this budget allocation will be recoupable from Uisce Éireann. The eight priority estates are listed below.

- 1. Lis Na Dara, Dundalk*
- 2. Bishops Court, Termonfeckin*
- 3. Riverbank, Drogheda*
- 4. Rivercourt, Drogheda*

5. *Blakely Close, Dundalk*
6. *Sandygrove and Sandygrove Close, Blackrock*
7. *Mayneway, Kilsaran*
8. *Mullavalley Court, Louth Village*

Minute No. 72/26

Notice of Motion: Cllr. Fiona MhicConchoille
Seconded: Cllr. Maeve Yore

That Louth County Council, recognizing housing as a social and human right, acknowledges the ongoing issue of overcrowding within the local authority housing stock and the negative impact this has on family wellbeing, children's development, and community stability.

The Council therefore calls on the Chief Executive to examine and report on the feasibility of attic conversions in suitable council-owned houses as a potential, practical and cost-effective means of increasing bedroom capacity for existing tenant families, where appropriate, and where families wish to remain in their current homes and communities. This examination should include consideration of structural suitability, full compliance with fire safety, building regulations and housing standards, and a detailed cost analysis. This analysis should have regard to indicative costs associated with attic conversions, generally estimated in the region of €30,000–€50,000 per dwelling, when compared with the average cost of delivering new-build local authority housing units, estimated at approximately €300,000–€350,000 per unit.

The report should further consider the potential benefits of such an approach, including reducing pressure on housing transfer lists, preventing unnecessary family displacement, addressing overcrowding in a timely manner, and making more effective use of existing public housing stock by enabling three-bedroom houses to function as four-bedroom homes where appropriate.

The Council further calls on the Chief Executive to bring a report on this matter before the Housing Strategic Policy Committee and the full Council within six months.

Go bhfuil Comhairle Chontae Lú ag aithint go bhfuil tithíocht mar chearta sóisialta agus daonna, ag tógáil faoi deara an fadhb leanúnach de phlódú le linn an stór tithíocht atá ag an údarás agus an tionchar diúltach ar sláinte teaghlaigh, forbairt an pháiste agus seasmhacht phobail mar thoradh de seo. Le seo, glaonn an comhairle ar an príomhfheidhmeannach chun scrúdú agus tuairisc a dhéanamh ar fhéidearthacht na n-

athoiriúnaithe áiléir i dtithe oiriúnacha ag an chomhairle mar bhealach praiticiúil an toilleadh seomra leapa a mhéadú do theaghlaigh ag iarradh fanacht sna pobail ina bhfuil síad. Ba chóir don scrúdú seo smaoineamh a dhéanamh ar an oiriúnacht struchtúrach, comhlíonadh le sláinte tine, rialacháin fhoirgnimh agus anailís chostais a chur san áireamh. Ba chóir don anailís seo a bheith bunaithe ar na costais a ghabhann le athoiriúnaithe áiléir: le costais thart feadh €30,000 go €50,000 in aghaidh an tí, i gcomparáid leis an mheánchostais atá ar ionad tithíochta nua a thógáil - sa réigiún idir €300,000 agus €500,000 in aghaidh an ionaid. Chomh maith le seo, ba chóir don tuairisc seo a bheith in ann ná buntáistí a aithint agus cur chuige mar seo curtha i bhfeidhm, go háirithe ó thaobh an brú a laghdú maidir leis an liosta aistriithe. Leis an bhealach seo, ní bheadh aon chuir isteach gan gá ar na teaghlaigh agus ag an am céanna beidh dul i ngleic leis an phlódú ann sa mhodh is fearr: trí thithe le trí seomra leapa atá sa stór poiblí a bheith in ann dul i bhfeidhm mar thithe le ceithre seomra leapa nuair atá sé oiriúnach. Chomh maith le seo cuireann an comhairle glaoch ar an príomhfheidhmeannach tuairisc a chur in iúl roimh an Choiste don Bheartais Stráiteiseach Tithíochta le linn sé mhí.

Reply: G. Murphy, Housing & Culture Delivery

It is acknowledged that cases of overcrowding occur in tenancies throughout Louth County Council housing stock. The Housing Section responds to such cases by way of transfer arrangements, and it is noted that the Allocations Scheme provides for 10% of available dwellings to be allocated to transfers, in so far as practicable.

While the sentiment underpinning the motion is acknowledged, attic conversions are neither a practical nor implementable solution in the housing stock due to the requirements of fire safety, building regulation, housing and planning standards.

It must also be noted that there is no funding stream or other resources available to support the implementation of such a programme as existing funding streams are focused on addressing the refurbishment of void units, carrying out ongoing reactive and proactive maintenance to the growing housing stock, and the implementation of the county-wide energy efficiency retrofit programme.

Aithnítear go dtarlaíonn cásanna plódaithe i dtionóntachtaí ar fud stoc tithíochta Chomhairle Contae Lú. Freagraíonn an Rannóg Tithíochta do chásanna den sórt sin trí shocruithe aistrithe, agus tugtar faoi deara go bhforáiltear leis an Scéim Leithdháiltí do 10% de na teaghaisí atá ar fáil a leithdháileadh ar aistrithe, a mhéid is indéanta.

Cé go n-aithnítear an meon atá mar bhonn taca leis an tairiscint, ní réiteach praiticiúil ná infheidhmithe sa stoc tithíochta iad comhráite áiléire mar gheall ar riachtanais na sábháilteachta dóiteáin, na rialála tógála, na gcaighdeán tithíochta agus pleanála.

Ní mór a thabhairt faoi deara freisin nach bhfuil aon sruth cistiúcháin ná acmhainní eile ar fáil chun tacú le cur chun feidhme cláir den sórt sin toisc go bhfuil na sruthanna cistiúcháin atá ann cheana dírithe ar aghaidh a thabhairt ar athchóiriú aonad folúis, cothabháil fhrithghníomhach agus réamhghníomhach leanúnach a dhéanamh ar an stoc tithíochta atá ag fás, agus ar chur chun feidhme an chláir iarfheistithe éifeachtúlachta fuinnimh ar fud an chontae.

Minute No. 73/26

Notice of Question: Cllr. Declan Power

Can Louth County Council outline its policy in relation to the treatment of Carer's Allowance as assessable income under the Differential Rent Scheme, including:

1. When this practice commenced
2. The rationale for treating Carer's Allowance as a second income
3. The number of social housing tenants currently affected by this assessment.

Reply: Ger Murphy, Director of Housing and Culture Delivery

1. *Prior to 2015, full-time basic rate Carers Allowance was fully reckonable for rent assessments purposes. This was amended in the 2015 Rent Scheme, whereby Carers Allowance was partially disregarded in the calculation of differential rent. Carers Allowance was calculated at the basic social welfare rate and the amount in excess of that figure was not treated as assessable income. This remains the case to date.*

2. *The sole source of income for a proportion of tenants is full-time basic rate Carers Allowance. Should Carers Allowance be treated as non-assessable, this proportion of tenants would have an assessable income of zero. A proportion of tenants are in receipt of multiple different social welfare payments, and these payments are deemed as assessable income, unless otherwise stated in the Rent Scheme. Some forms of payment, such as Child Benefit and Domiciliary Care*

Allowance, are not deemed as assessable income. Other payments such as full-time basic rate Carers Allowance are partially disregarded when assessing differential rent.

3. *This information is not readily available and would require an analysis of individual housing files.*

Minute No. 74/26

Correspondence

Members noted the following correspondence:

- Clare County Council 10th February 2026
- Wexford County Council 10th February 2026
- Wicklow County Council 10th February 2026
- Galway City Council 12th February 2026
- Wexford County Council 17th February 2026
- Westmeath County Council 18th February 2026
- Galway County Council 4th March 2026
- Sligo County Council 5th March 2026
- Leitrim County Council 5th March 2026
- Clare County Council 10th March 2026
- Longford County Council 12th March 2026

Minute No. 75/26

Congratulations

- Congratulations were extended to Ms. Kate O'Connor on securing a bronze medal at the World Athletics Indoor Championships, becoming the first Irish athlete to win two World Indoor medals.
- Members paid tribute to Ms. Colette Moss, Senior Executive Officer, who will retire on 2nd April 2026 following 43 years of dedicated service with Louth County Council.
- Congratulations were offered to the Louth Senior GAA team on their recent victory, with Members commending the continued development of the current panel.

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

Date: 20th April '26

Cathaoirleach: 

Meeting Administrator: 