

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024



Comhairle Contae **Lú**  
**Louth** County Council

**Your** council  
for **Your** community

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# Introduction

Introduction  
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2024 at a Glance  
Elected Members





**Kevin Callan**  
Cathaoirleach



**Joe McGuinness**  
Temporary Chief Executive

# Foreword

We are pleased to present the Louth County Council Annual Report for 2024, a year of delivery, investment and innovation across County Louth.

In 2024, the people of Louth participated in both local and national elections, reaffirming their commitment to democratic engagement. Voter turnout for the local elections was over 48%, showcasing the deep investment by our communities in shaping the future of our county. As of 31st December, our Electoral Register stood at 101,861, with 98.28% of entries including date of birth and 98.65% including an Eircode, reflecting the strength and accuracy of our civic data infrastructure.

Housing remained a top priority. Louth County Council delivered 438 new social housing units through direct builds, turnkey acquisitions, and partnerships with Approved Housing Bodies. This represents 78% of our multi-year target under the Government's Housing for All plan. Notably, Ireland's first 3D-printed homes were completed in Dundalk, showcasing our commitment to modern construction methods. The energy retrofit programme upgraded 150 homes to B2 BER standard or better, and €15.9 million was collected in rental income.

Major infrastructure projects progressed, including Phase 1 of the Port Access Northern Cross Route and the redevelopment of the Drogheda Civic Offices.

A particular highlight of the year was welcoming Taoiseach Simon Harris, Tánaiste Micheál Martin and Minister Malcolm Noonan to the site of the Narrow Water Bridge in June 2024 to mark the official commencement of construction. Supported by the government, the €60 million cross-border investment in connectivity and tourism is a transformative project that symbolises regional cooperation and will unlock long-term economic opportunity for the east border region.

With further projects such as the Dundalk and Ardee Flood Relief Schemes, the Carlingford Lough Greenway, and the redevelopment of Ardee Castle progressing, we are building a county that is future-ready and resilient.

Community and cultural development remained central to our work. Over 534 sports programmes were delivered through the Louth Local Sports Partnership, engaging more than 21,000 participants. Initiatives such as Africa Day, the Age-Friendly Expo, and the Ardee Garden Care & Repair Service strengthened intergenerational and intercultural connections. The Age Friendly Programme expanded significantly, and the Age Friendly Business Recognition Programme saw 16 businesses participate, with six receiving Age Friendly Charters.

Economic development was supported through

the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), which facilitated the creation of 25 new jobs, delivered over 700 mentoring sessions, and hosted more than 1,000 participants in training programmes. The launch of the Drogheda Digital Innovation Hub and the Boyne Innovate programme marked a new phase in regional entrepreneurship. LEO also approved €426,125 in grant funding and supported 39 Trading Online Vouchers worth €82,288.

The LEADER Programme 2014-2024 concluded with €6.51 million allocated across 331 projects. In 2024, six new projects were approved, and €320,275.82 in funding was allocated. The Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024–2029 was launched, aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and setting a strategic framework for inclusive growth.

Environmental and climate action initiatives included the opening of our first carbon-neutral building at the Dromiskin Dog Pound and the launch of the Louth Climate Action Plan 2024–2029. Investment in EV infrastructure, energy retrofits, and sustainable transport projects continued, alongside flood relief schemes in Dundalk, Ardee, Drogheda, and Baltray.

Cultural services flourished, with the opening of Dunleer Library, the 30th anniversary of Louth County Museum, and the Brigid 1500 and Lú Festival of Light drawing thousands of attendees. The launch of a searchable online database of burials at St Patrick's Cemetery in Dundalk marked a major milestone in heritage preservation.

2024 also marked the retirement of our long-serving Chief Executive, Joan Martin, who stepped down in September after nearly 50 years of dedicated service to Louth County Council. Joan's leadership, particularly over the past 15 years as Chief Executive, has left an indelible mark on the county. Her tenure was defined by integrity, innovation, and a deep commitment to public service. From major infrastructure projects to community development and cross-border cooperation, Joan's vision helped shape modern Louth. On behalf of the council and the people of Louth, we thank Joan for her extraordinary contribution and wish her every happiness in her well-earned retirement.

As we reflect on 2024, it is clear that Louth is a county of ambition, resilience, and delivery. This report documents the breadth of our work and the impact of our collective efforts. We thank our elected members, staff, partners, and residents for their continued commitment to building a vibrant and future-ready Louth.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh.



Kevin Callan



Joe McGuinness

# 2024 At a Glance



**101,861**  
Total Electorate



**1,060**  
Planning Applications



**7,000**  
Dog Licences Purchased



**192**  
New Staff Appointed



**1,253**  
Fire Incidents



**241,771**  
Visits to the  
Libraries



**174**  
Dog Fines  
Issued



**22,132**  
Active  
Library  
Members

# Electoral Areas of County Louth

County Louth is divided into the three municipal districts of Drogheda, Ardee and Dundalk. For electoral purposes the county is made up of five electoral areas: Dundalk-Carlingford, Dundalk-South, Ardee, Drogheda Urban and Drogheda Rural.

## Register of Electors

The Rolling Register of Electors continued to be updated during 2024 and the following stats are reflective of the Electoral Register as at 31st December 2024:

# 101,861

### Total electorate

Total Electorate with DOB	101,112	98.28%	Total No. of Presidential Electors	93,712
Total Electorate with Eircode	100,487	98.65%	Total No. of Dáil Electors	94,874
Total Electorate with email address	20,085	19.72%	Total No. of Local Electors	101,777
Total Electorate with contact number	17,138	16.82%	Total No. of European Electors	94,482
Total Electorate with DOB & Eircode	98,883	97.08%	Total No. of Potential European Electors	2,911
Total electorate with PPSN	20,863	20.48%	Total No. of Electors with NFA	6
			Total No. of Pending Electors (16/17 yr olds)	84
			<b>Total Postal Votes</b>	<b>922</b>
			Gardaí	2
			Defence Forces	409
			Diplomats	18
			Illness/Disability	56
			Occupation/Students	0
			Prisoners	12
			Anonymous	3
			Special Voters	422

The Franchise Section of Louth County Council experienced three Electoral events during 2024: Referenda, Local Elections and General Election, which contributed to many additions and deletions from the register in preparation for these electoral events.

The total number of additions, deletions and modifications processed on the Electoral Register during 2024 were:

Deletions from Register in 2024	5,985
Modifications on Register in 2024	7,765
Additions to Register in 2024	12,238

Voters are urged to regularly check the Electoral Register by visiting [www.checktheregister.ie](http://www.checktheregister.ie) to ensure their details are accurate and up to date.

Dundalk/Carlingford



Dundalk South



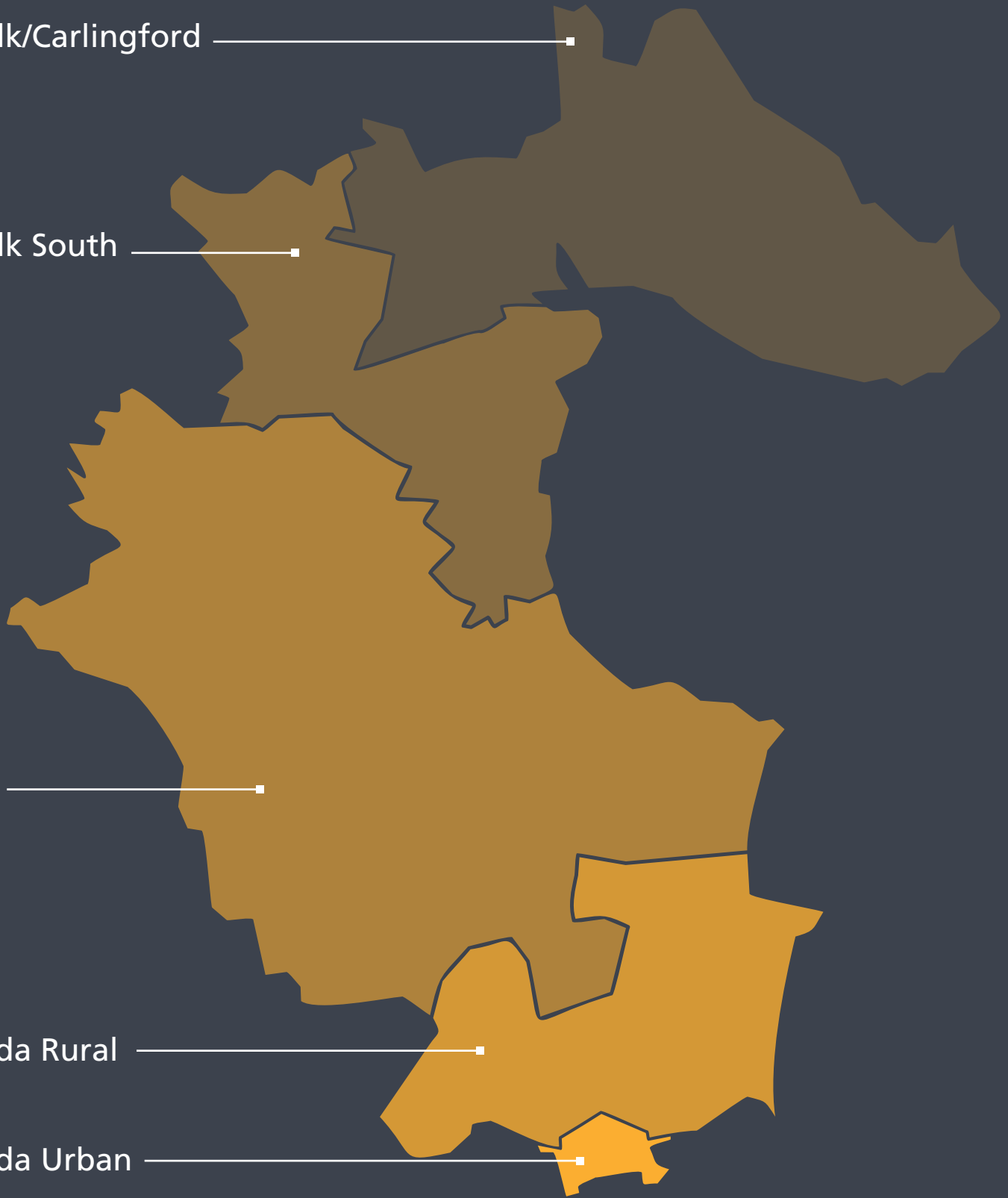
Ardee



Drogheda Rural



Drogheda Urban



# Ardee Electoral Area

## 6 Members



**Bernie Conlon**  
Non-Party

Email:  
[bernie.conlon@louthcoco.ie](mailto:bernie.conlon@louthcoco.ie)



**Dolores Minogue**  
Fine Gael

Email:  
[dolores.minogue@louthcoco.ie](mailto:dolores.minogue@louthcoco.ie)



**Jim Tenanty**  
Non-Party

Email:  
[jim.tenanty@louthcoco.ie](mailto:jim.tenanty@louthcoco.ie)



**John Sheridan**  
Fianna Fáil

Email:  
[john.sherian@louthcoco.ie](mailto:john.sherian@louthcoco.ie)



**Pearse McGeough**  
Sinn Féin

Email:  
[pearse.mcgeough@louthcoco.ie](mailto:pearse.mcgeough@louthcoco.ie)



**Rachel Kerley**  
Fine Gael

Email:  
[rachel.kerley@louthcoco.ie](mailto:rachel.kerley@louthcoco.ie)

# Drogheda Rural Electoral Area

## 4 Members



**Anne Marie Ford**  
Fine Gael

Email:  
[anmarie.ford@louthcoco.ie](mailto:anmarie.ford@louthcoco.ie)



**Declan Power**  
Non-Party

Email:  
[dolores.minogue@louthcoco.ie](mailto:dolores.minogue@louthcoco.ie)



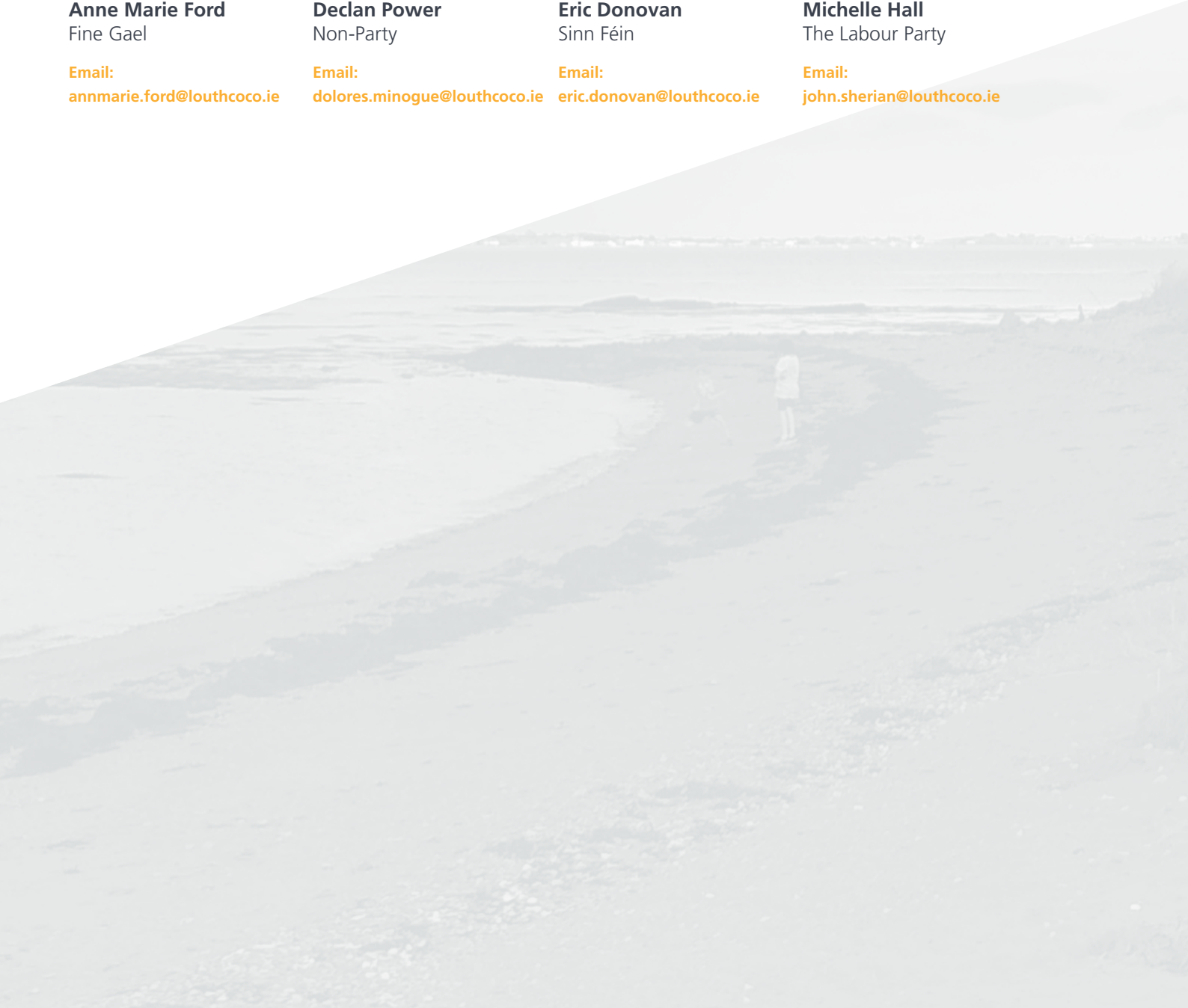
**Eric Donovan**  
Sinn Féin

Email:  
[eric.donovan@louthcoco.ie](mailto:eric.donovan@louthcoco.ie)



**Michelle Hall**  
The Labour Party

Email:  
[john.sherian@louthcoco.ie](mailto:john.sherian@louthcoco.ie)



# Drogheda Urban Electoral Area

## 6 Members



**Debbie McCole**  
Sinn Féin

Email:  
[debbie.mccole@louthcoco.ie](mailto:debbie.mccole@louthcoco.ie)



**Ejiro O'Hare Stratton**  
Fine Gael

Email:  
[ejiro.oharestratton@louthcoco.ie](mailto:ejiro.oharestratton@louthcoco.ie)



**James Byrne**  
Fianna Fáil

Email:  
[james.byrne@louthcoco.ie](mailto:james.byrne@louthcoco.ie)



**Kevin Callan**  
Non-Party

Email:  
[kevin.callan@louthcoco.ie](mailto:kevin.callan@louthcoco.ie)



**Paddy McQuillan**  
Non-Party

Email:  
[paddy.mcquillan@louthcoco.ie](mailto:paddy.mcquillan@louthcoco.ie)



**Pio Smith**  
The Labour Party

Email:  
[pio.smith@louthcoco.ie](mailto:pio.smith@louthcoco.ie)

# Dundalk Carlingford Electoral Area

## 6 Members



**Andrea McKeivitt**  
Fianna Fáil

Email:  
[anmarie.ford@louthcoco.ie](mailto:anmarie.ford@louthcoco.ie)



**Antóin Watters**  
Sinn Féin

Email:  
[antoin.watters@louthcoco.ie](mailto:antoin.watters@louthcoco.ie)



**Ciaran Fisher**  
Non-Party

Email:  
[ciaran.fisher@louthcoco.ie](mailto:ciaran.fisher@louthcoco.ie)



**Fiona Mhic Conchoille**  
Sinn Féin

Email:  
[fiona.mhicconchoille@louthcoco.ie](mailto:fiona.mhicconchoille@louthcoco.ie)



**John Reilly**  
Fine Gael

Email:  
[john.reilly@louthcoco.ie](mailto:john.reilly@louthcoco.ie)



**Seán Kelly**  
Fianna Fáil

Email:  
[sean.kelly@louthcoco.ie](mailto:sean.kelly@louthcoco.ie)

# Dundalk Electoral Area

## 7 Members



**Emma Coffey**  
Fianna Fáil

Email:  
[emma.coffey@louthcoco.ie](mailto:emma.coffey@louthcoco.ie)



**Kevin Meenan**  
Sinn Féin

Email:  
[kevin.meenan@louthcoco.ie](mailto:kevin.meenan@louthcoco.ie)



**Maeve Yore**  
Non-Party

Email:  
[maeve.yore@louthcoco.ie](mailto:maeve.yore@louthcoco.ie)



**Marianne Butler**  
Green Party/Comhaontas Glas

Email:  
[marianne.butler@louthcoco.ie](mailto:marianne.butler@louthcoco.ie)



**Robert Nash**  
Fine Gael

Email:  
[robert.nash@louthcoco.ie](mailto:robert.nash@louthcoco.ie)



**Shane McGuinness**  
Fianna Fáil

Email:  
[shane.mcguinness@louthcoco.ie](mailto:shane.mcguinness@louthcoco.ie)



**Sionnain McCann**  
Sinn Féin

Email:  
[sionnainn.mccann@louthcoco.ie](mailto:sionnainn.mccann@louthcoco.ie)

# Dail Eireann Elected Members

## 2 Members



**Joanna Byrne**  
Sinn Féin

Email:  
[joanna.byrne@louthcoco.ie](mailto:joanna.byrne@louthcoco.ie)



**Paula Butterfly**  
Fine Gael

Email:  
[paula.butterfly@louthcoco.ie](mailto:paula.butterfly@louthcoco.ie)

## Outgoing Members



**Conor Keelan**  
Fianna Fail



**Edel Corrigan**  
Sinn Féin



**Eileen Tully**  
Fine Gael



**Emma Cutlip**  
The Labour Party



**Liam Reilly**  
Fianna Fáil



**Thomas Sharkey**  
Sinn Féin



**Tom Cunningham**  
Sinn Féin

# 2



# Organisational Development

Corporate Services provides support service to councillors and senior management, along with general services to members of the public. It is responsible for the delivery of customer services, the administration of council meetings, the compilation of the Register of Electors, preparing the Council's annual report, Corporate Estate management, health and safety, data protection and handling Freedom of Information requests.

The Community Section within Organisational Development promotes public participation with Louth County Council, supports pride of place and community efforts, assisting local groups to access grant funding for environmental, cultural and town enhancement, and pushing the community led tidy town and village ethos with a heavy focus on ensuring everyone in the community is included.

The Human Resources Section strives to ensure Louth County Council is an equal opportunity and accessible employer, promoting staff welfare and safe work practices throughout.

The Climate and Waste Section address all matters in relation to our Climate Challenges and regulating all matters in relation to waste. This also includes water quality and the Litter Function.

Our Vets Sections deals with all matters in relation to Dog and Horse Control and also our contracted functions with regards to Food Safety as provided in an agreement with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.



# Council Meetings 2024

A total of 14 meetings of the Full Council were held in 2024, a scheduled monthly meeting on the third Monday of each month, an annual meeting in June and a statutory budget meeting and a budget workshop in September. There are usually no meetings held in August.

Each of the Municipal Districts held 11 statutory monthly meetings, plus 1 annual meeting and 1 budget meeting. On top of this Drogheda Borough District held 1 special online meeting.

Louth County Council Chairperson/Cathaoirleach  
**Cllr Kevin Callan**

Municipal District of Dundalk Chairperson/Cathaoirleach  
**Cllr Sean Kelly**

Mayor of Drogheda and Borough District of Drogheda  
Chairperson/ Cathaoirleach  
**Cllr Paddy McQuillan**

Municipal District of Ardee Chairperson/Cathaoirleach  
**Cllr John Sheridan**



## Meetings of Louth County Council in 2024:

Monthly Meetings	1
Annual Meetings	1
Budget Meetings	1
Special Meetings	4
Corporate Policy Group (CPG)	11

## Municipal District Meetings

Borough District of Drogheda	11
Municipal District of Ardee	11
Municipal District of Dundalk	11
Municipal District Budget Meetings	3
Municipal District Annual Meetings	3
Borough District of Drogheda Special Meeting	2
Municipal District of Dundalk Special Meeting	1

## Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs)

SPC – Housing	4
SPC – Economic Development & Enterprise	4
SPC – Planning & Support Infrastructure	4
SPC – Climate Action & Energy	5
SPC – Community, Quality of Life, & Creativity	4

## Joint Policing Committees/Local Policing Forum (LPF)

JPC Steering Group	2
LPF – Dundalk	4
LPF – Drogheda	4
LPF – Ardee	4
Audit Committee	4

# Strategic Policy Committee Activities 2024

## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

There were 2 meetings of the Social Development SPC held in 2024;

Agenda items included the Allocation Scheme Review, Rightsizing Scheme, Long Term Leasing, Transfer Policy, Homelessness Action Plan and Local Housing Plan for Disabled Persons. Guest speaker Senior Staff Officer Linda Mc Hugh gave an in-dept presentation on The Vacant House Scheme (Croí Cónaithe) in the February meeting.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

There were 4 meetings of the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC held in 2024. For the first three meetings in January, March and May, agenda items included: Implementation of the Local Economic & Community Plan, extension of the Shop Front Grant scheme to cover the full County, updates on Business Supports available from the Local Enterprise Office and Economic Development.

With the local elections in June the SPC was dissolved and a new committee ratified in November who then met to discuss the role of the SPC and agree the workplan for the lifetime of the Committee.

## COMMUNITY & PLACEMAKING STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

The newly formed Community and Placemaking SPC convened for the first time in December 2024. The first meeting was a discussion of the SPC Functions as the formulation, development, monitoring and review of Louth County Council's policies along with the Role and Scope of the Strategic Policy Committee.

A key topic was the proposed Work Programme for 2025 including Play Policy, Replacement for the Litter League, Road Safety Plan and Traffic Calming policy among many. The insights and inputs of the SPC will be invaluable as this committee develops in the coming year.

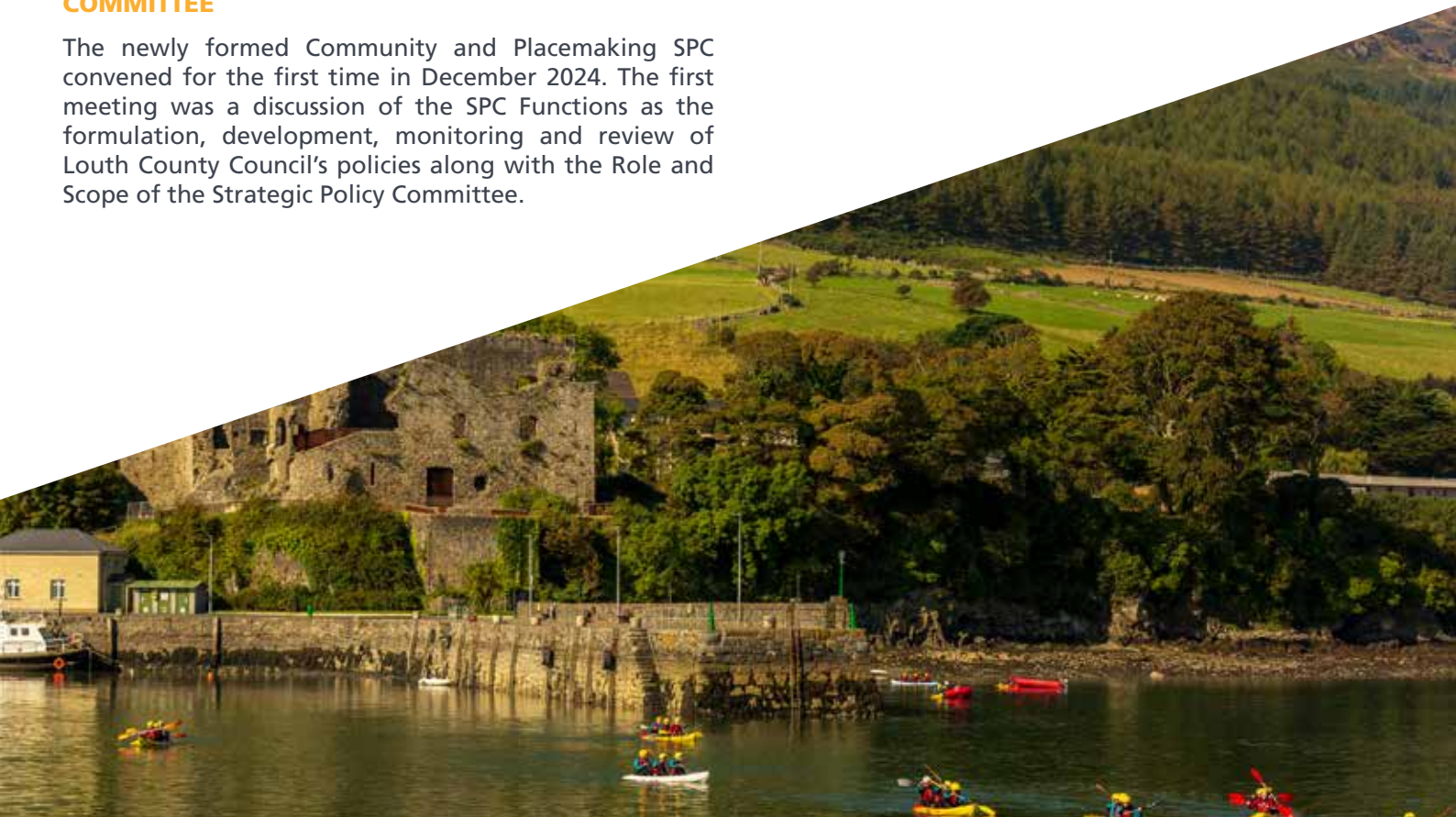
## CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE (DENISE MEEGAN)

During 2024, one meeting was held on the 29th of January 2024.

The main topics that this SPC addressed in 2024 were The Louth County Council Climate Action Plan, 2024-2029, adoption and public consultation process, the Community Climate Action Fund for Louth, rollout and commencement process and the Community Gardens and Allotments issues paper.

## PLANNING SPC (LAURA MCCARRAGHER)

There were two meeting of the Planning and Support Infrastructure SPC held in 2024. Agenda items included updated on the Drogheda and Dundalk Local Area Plans and the progression of a Policy Paper on Architectural Conservation Areas.



# Civic Awards & Events

Civic Awards are awarded annually in recognition of excellent contributions of individuals and organisations to the community in County Louth. In accordance with Section 74 of the Local Government Act 2001, Award recipients are nominated by a local representative for their dedication, achievements and contributions to community and sporting life at local, national, and international levels

Two Annual Civic Award ceremonies took place in 2024. The Borough District of Drogheda, Mayoral Awards 2024, were presented, by Deputy Mayor Kevin Callan in the Highlanes Gallery, Drogheda and Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District of Dundalk Cllr Seán Kelly presented the Dundalk Civic Awards in the foyer of County Hall, Dundalk.

Recipients of awards are listed on our website:  
[www.louthcoco.ie/en/louth\\_county\\_council/civic-awards/](http://www.louthcoco.ie/en/louth_county_council/civic-awards/)



Louth County Council also contributed to and assisted with other ceremonies throughout the year including wreath laying at the Cenotaph on 9th November 2024 and an annual memorial for Halpin & Moran which took place on 11th February 2024.



## CIVIC RECEPTION

The Members of Dundalk Municipal District bestowed a Civic Honour on the Sisters of St Louis in recognition of the immense contribution made by the Sisters to the town of Dundalk for over 70 years.



A breakdown of costs expended by Louth County Council for civic awards is below:

Events 2024	Cost
Halpin Moran Memorial	€240
Sisters of St Louis Civic Reception	€1,040.65
Drogheda Mayoral Awards	€944.40
Dundalk Municipal District Awards	€1,244.50
Cenotaph Memorial	€1,126.31
<b>Total</b>	<b>€4,595.86</b>

# Veterinary Section

## FOOD SAFETY

Louth County Council Veterinary Section, under a Service Level Agreement with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, enforced food safety standards on one abattoir and fourteen meat processing plants under its supervision in the County.

The contract with the FSAI ended on the 31st December 2024 and the supervision of the food business organisations were transferred to the Department of Agriculture. The County Veterinary Officer, Garrett Shine, was also transferred to the Department of Agriculture.

## ANIMAL CONTROL & WELFARE

The overall number of dogs entering the pound in 2024 was 300, this is consistent with the 2023 figure.

Another trend in recent years is the numbers of dogs surrendered to the pound by owners for various reasons, currently accounting for 48% of the dog intake, again indicating responsible dog ownership.

All dogs coming into the pound are wormed, vaccinated and assessed by our qualified staff. Approximately 33% of dogs coming into the pound were already micro-chipped, but any dog that is not is then chipped at the pound.

The reach and followers of the Louth County Council Dog Pound Facebook page continues to rise, which greatly assists in the rehoming process, with enquiries from all over the country and sometimes abroad.



Dog licence sales remained steady with sales of just under 7000 licences (both annual and lifetime), with over 43% of these being purchased online.

174 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued in 2024 under the Control of Dogs Act 1986-1992.

Horse numbers remain low with 4 horses seized in 2024, the same as in 2023.



In September 2024, the Council’s new outdoor dog enrichment area at the Animal Pound in Dromiskin was opened. This is a fully enclosed, all-weather space that allows the dogs to regularly exercise and relax while they are at the pound and this has proven benefits to the health and wellbeing of the dogs in the pound. This was jointly funded by the Council and the Department of Rural and Community Development.

In January, the pound-keeper gave an information session on responsible dog ownership and care in Ardee and Drogheda libraries.

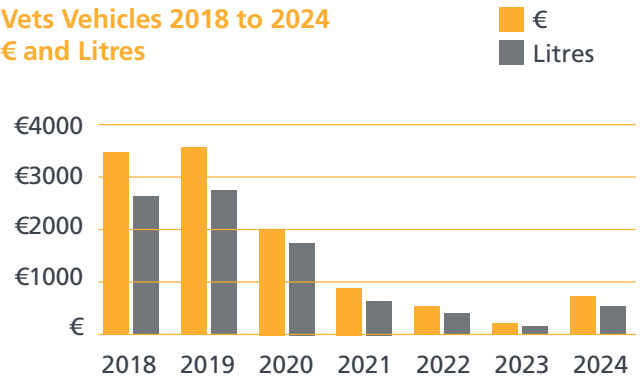
In February, the dog wardens and County Vet completed a one day training update course in safe handling equipment and techniques in dog control.

In September and October, the dog wardens and the County Vet attended two one day training courses in September and October on XL Bully dog identification organised by the Department of Rural and Community Development. This was in response to new regulations that were introduced on XL Bully type dogs under the Control of Dogs Act on the 1st of October.

**ENERGY CONSUMPTION**

The fleet consists of 2 electric vans and 1 jeep, which is required for use with the horsebox on horse control activities. The diesel consumption for 4 vehicles in 2018 was approximately 2,800L per year. Now with only 1 diesel vehicle in operation the diesel consumption has reduced to less than 500L in 2024.

**Vets Vehicles 2018 to 2024**  
€ and Litres



The pound is now Louth County Council’s first carbon neutral building following the installation of new technology.



# Human Resources

2024 was another busy year for Human Resources. As has been the case for the past number of years, significant activity took place in the Recruitment to minimize vacancies and ensure positions are filled in a timely manner. To this end, the number of recruitment competitions increased to 37 in 2024, resulting in 112 new staff members joined the organisation, and a further 80 existing members of staff being appointed to new positions in the Council. This included an expansion of the Council's outdoor workforce and the final implementation of the Strategic Workforce Plan.

HR continued to expand its Staff Wellbeing Programme in 2024. As the number of programmes and initiatives increased, a Staff Wellbeing Strategy was also launched.

As has been the case in previous years, the Council again placed considerable emphasis on upskilling and developing existing employees, supported by the Training section.

Throughout 2024 HR has also moved to digitalise its work, launching an online recruitment platform in Quarter 4 and also moving to online booking for training programmes. The other core work of HR such as workforce planning, payroll and employee support has also continued.

Competitions	37
New staff appointments (joiners)	112
Total staff appointments	192
Retirements/Resignations:	78
No. of Training Courses Held:	82
No. of Training Days:	166
No. of Training and Assistance Applications:	53



# Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2024-2028

- In 2024 SICAP supported 107 local community groups and registered 1221 individuals
- 107 community groups received developmental, technical and capacity building supports
- 23 Local Community Groups received grants including 2 Social Enterprises. In total 23 Grants were administered
- 1221 individuals engaged in lifelong learning and labour market supports
- 7 individuals were supported into employment
- 108 individuals referred by the Department of Social Protection were supported to establish their own business through the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme
- 93 individuals received education/training grants
- 12 individuals received enterprise grants

## Opening of Rathmullen Community House, Drogheda



## Youth Connect Fest, January 2024



## Digital Cafe, Smarter Living for Older People, Ardee, October 2024



# LEADER Programme

The LEADER Programme 2014-2022 concluded in 2024. By mid-July, the remaining fifteen project payment claims were completed and paid, bringing the total processed claims for the programme to 331. €6.51 million was allocated to projects across County Louth throughout the duration of Programme.

**Notable Achievements in 2024 included:**

- A Service Level Agreement between the LCDC, Louth County Council and Louth Local Development was signed in May 2024.
- The Louth Local Development Strategy (LDS) was launched in Louth County Council offices in May 2024
- Six projects were approved for funding in 2024.
- 62 Expressions of Interest for Funding were received in 2024 by the implementing partner, Louth Local Development.
- Louth County Council is the lead financial partner for the LEADER Programme in Co. Louth and they carry out the Article 48 checks on all projects and claims.

	<b>Total</b>
Expressions of Interest (EOI) Received	<b>62</b>
EOI eligible for Funding	<b>59</b>
Ineligible for Funding	<b>3</b>
Contracts Issued	<b>6</b>
Food Contracts Issued	<b>0</b>
Claims Processed	<b>0</b>
Funding Allocated	<b>€320,275.82</b>
Claims paid in 2024	<b>€0</b>

**GR8 ENTERTAINMENT LIMITED**

Funding of €196,588.85 was allocated to The GR Social in Park Street Dundalk. The project will renovate the old 'Dunnes Stores' building on Park Street into a bowling alley and games arcade.



Joe McGuinness, Chief Officer, Louth County Council, Alison Quail, Chairperson of the Louth Local Development Committee, Joan Martin, Chief Executive, Louth County Council and Ciaran Reid, Chief Executive of Louth Local Development at the Launch of the LEADER Programme 2023-27 in May 2024.



Pictured outside the premises are Ciaran Reid, Chief Executive, Louth Local Development, Dermot McArdle, Managing Director, GR8 Entertainment Limited and Finbar Gethins, Chief Officer, Louth Local Community Development Committee

# Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) 2024-2029

The final Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP), reflecting Stakeholder, Municipal District and Regional Authority input was approved by the LCDC on 15th January 2024 and the Economic SPC on 23rd January 2024.

The Louth LECP was approved by the Council on 19th February 2024 and officially launched by members of Louth LCDC and members of the Economic SPC on Monday 20th May 2024.

The Louth Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024-2029 is a strategic framework guiding the county's economic and community development for six years. Developed by Louth County Council in collaboration with key stakeholders, it aims to foster a prosperous, sustainable and inclusive community with a high quality of life.

## KEY ASPECTS OF THE PLAN:

- Informed by consultation with communities, businesses, government agencies and education providers.
- Incorporates lessons from the 2016-2022 LECP.
- Structured approach: High-level goals, objectives and outcomes are outlined in the LECP Framework, while actions are detailed in a rolling two-year Implementation Plan with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- Aligned with local, regional and national policies, including the County Development Plan, National Planning Framework and Climate Action Plan.
- Commitment to sustainability and equality, with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a core principle.
- Addresses cross-cutting priorities such as climate action, equality, poverty, rurality, age and disability to meet public sector obligations under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014.

The plan ensures continuous adaptation and monitoring, updating every two years to reflect progress and emerging policies.

## LOCAL ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME

At their March meeting, the Louth Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) approved €185,641.85 of funding to 88 Local Community & Voluntary Groups in Louth through the Local Enhancement Programme 2024 (LEP).



Members of Louth LCDC and the Economic SPC at the launch of the Louth Local Economic & Community Plan 2024-2029

The LEP is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and administered by the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) in each Local Authority area. The Programme supported groups, particularly in disadvantaged areas, to carry out necessary repairs and improvements to their facilities, and to purchase equipment, such as tables and chairs, tools and signage, laptops and printers, lawnmowers and training equipment, supporting them to continue to provide valuable services to the people in their area, and in the process strengthen the bonds that tie communities together.

€32,568.74 of the funding was ring-fenced for Women's Groups and 20 projects benefitted from this funding.

The fund was advertised in local newspapers, on social media and through the PPN, resulting in 151 applications received. This was an increase in numbers from the previous year and the fund also saw an increase in groups applying for funding under the Local Enhancement Programme for the first time.

Funding was allocated across each Municipal District Area.

The table below sets out a summary of how the total LEP fund of €185,641.85 was allocated throughout the county:

Events	No. of Successful Applications	Allocation
Dundalk	41	€83,218.76
Drogheda	29	€64,014.43
Ardee	18	€38,408.66
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>€185,641.85</b>

# Africa Day 2024

Africa Day 2024 was celebrated across Co Louth from Friday 22nd Ma to Sunday 24th May 2024. Migrant led community groups such as Culture Connect & The African Culture Centre (Dundalk) ran events across the entire county.

It was the first year that an event was held in the Mid Louth area and it proved a great success with many attending the event on Friday 22nd May at the Ardee Parish Centre to celebrate African music, dance, crafts and cuisine.

Events were also held in Dundalk and Drogheda over the weekend with a mixture of entertainments and attractions to celebrate Ireland's growing links with the continent of Africa.

All events were free of charge and celebrated African cultures and the positive impact of the African diaspora in Ireland.

Funding towards some events was provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs in conjunction with Irish Aid and administered by Louth County Council Community Office.



A selection of the many beautiful African fabrics and fashions on display at Africa Day Celebrations across Co Louth in 2024



Africa Day celebrations in Ardee



Africa Day celebrations in Dundalk



Africa Day celebrations in Drogheda

# Louth Age Friendly

The Age Friendly Programme is dedicated to building a community where older individuals can live autonomous, independent and valued lives, with support from the Louth Age Friendly Alliance and the Louth Older People's Council (OPC). This work was continued in 2024 with a number of different events and projects.

## CHALLENGING AGEISM DRAME PROJECT

Age Friendly Louth were successful in securing funding from Creative Ireland to explore the topic of ageism in Co Louth through the medium of creative arts, and partnered with An Tain Arts Centre to deliver this project. A number of workshops took place across the county with a view to producing two short films. Filming took place in July 2024 and a screening was held in An Tain Arts Centre in August 2024 for participants and their family and friends. One of the films was also featured as part of the Louth Age Friendly Expo in October 2024 and the participants met again in December to take part in a focus group to evaluate the project.



Participants in the Challenging Ageism Drama Project

## ARDEE GARDEN CARE & REPAIR SERVICE

The Ardee Garden Care & Repair Service was launched by Age Friendly Louth, in conjunction with the Louth OPC, in June 2024. This innovative community project involves collaboration between Ardee Tidy Towns, Dee Hub, An Garda Síochána, Louth County Council and Age Friendly Louth to provide free gardening services for older and vulnerable people. The initiative helps those struggling to maintain their gardens by offering assistance with tasks like grass cutting, weeding and hedge trimming. The

goal is to support older individuals, allowing them to live independently and safely in their homes while fostering a sense of community and well-being. This ongoing service enhances the quality of life for residents in Ardee and is supported by the Ardee Municipal District Elected Members as part of their Discretionary Budget 2024. The project was shortlisted for an Age Friendly Ireland award under the Environment theme and received a certificate of achievement in recognition of the local success and positive impact of the project in improving the lives of older people in the local area.



Ardee Garden Care & Repair project partners receive their Certificate of Accreditation from Age Friendly Ireland

## LOUTH AGE FRIENDLY EXPO 2024

Age Friendly Louth hosted over 250 people at the Ardee Parish Centre in October 2024, to celebrate Positive Ageing Week. Gavin Duffy, Age Friendly Ambassador for Co Louth, opened the event and highlighted the positive aspects of ageing, the vital roles older people play and the vitality of older age. The Expo featured key speakers on topics such as positive ageing, ageism, physical activity and the importance of diet and hydration, with presenters from the HSE, DKIT and the Louth Older People's Council. Over 35 service providers, community groups and state agencies exhibited, showcasing services to support older people in County Louth. These included information on safety & security, community supports, health & wellbeing, finance, sports & leisure and recreation & technology.

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# Louth Age Friendly



Louth Age Friendly EXPO 2nd October 2024 in Ardee Parish Centre

## WORKSHOPS

Training provided by Age Friendly Louth continued in 2024 with a Business Training Programme in April and a Promoting Positive Ageing workshop in November. A Sports Taster Day took place in September at the Sport Ireland Campus and a number of sustainable workshops were facilitated during 2024 including:

- 5 week Arts & Crafts course for the clients of Tredagh Lodge Day Care Centre
- Art workshop for Redeemer Ladies Group to celebrate Social Inclusion Week 2024
- Fashion & Art workshops in Dundalk & Drogheda to celebrate Climate Action Week



Louth Age Friendly EXPO 2nd October 2024 in Ardee Parish Centre



Louth Age Friendly EXPO 2nd October 2024 in Ardee Parish Centre

## AGE FRIENDLY ALLIANCE

The Age Friendly Alliance met during 2024 to discuss the views, interests and needs of older people in the county. They continued their work on reviewing the current Age Friendly Strategy and preparing a new strategy for Co Louth.

# Louth Age Friendly

## LOUTH OLDER PEOPLE'S COUNCIL

The Older People's Council (OPC) also met several times during the year and continue to represent the voice of older people in Co Louth by bringing issues and areas of concern to the Age Friendly Alliance and influencing the decision making process in the Age Friendly Programme. Members have been involved in the following event/activities in 2024:

- Hosting of members of Meath OPC at the Netwell CASALA Centre where there was a presentation from the Integrated Care Programme for Older People
- Participation in Accessibility Audit in Drogheda
- Attendance at Age Friendly Conference in Kilkenny City
- Involvement in workshops/focus groups on Climate Action, Financial Literacy for Older People and Challenging Ageism
- Ardee Garden Care & Repair Service
- Age Friendly Christmas Bag Project – aided the delivery of over 250 Christmas bags to older and vulnerable people in Co Louth



Members of Louth OPC & Meath OPC at DKIT Netwell CASALA Centre



Joe Grogan, Chairperson Louth OPC, Louise Larkin Louth Age Friendly Team & Venora O'Brien Louth OPC at Age Friendly Ireland Conference in Kilkenny



Members of Louth OPC meeting in County Hall Dundalk

# Comhairle na nÓg



Participants at the Cross Border Youth Conference at the Lisdoon, Dundalk

## YOUTH COUNCIL NETWORKING PROJECT

For 15 years Louth Comhairle na nOg has been delivering cross border projects with Newry and Mourne Youth Council. This has involved cross border events, training and visits to both Dail Eireann and Stormont. In 2024 the young people completed events on Politics and Voting, Climate Change and Community Participation. They also got to meet members of the Cross Border Committee of Elected Representatives under the MOU between Louth County Council and Newry, Mourne and Down Councils.

## STORMONT VISIT 27TH JUNE 2024

The young people visited Stormont on the 27th June and took part in the Parliament Education Programme. This included a tour of the Stormont building and discussions on voting and legislation. The young people got to visit the Assembly Chamber and took part in a mock vote on young people voting from 16 years of age.



Visit to Stormont Parliament Building in Belfast

## ILLÚMINATE — YOUTH EZINE

In 2024 Louth Comhairle na nOg developed the ILLÚminate ezine for young people in Louth. The feedback from young people at the 2023 Annual Conference highlighted the need for information on services in their areas and

supports when they need them. The Comhairle members developed the online magazine to provide interesting articles, up to date information on local sports and youth clubs and contact details for local services who provide supports for young people. This was launched at the Annual Conference on the 14th November 2024.

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Annual conference was held on the 14th November in Redeemer FRC. The event brought 108 young people together to discuss issues, attend workshops and learn about Louth Comhairle in a safe and fun environment. The event was a huge success.



Participants at Louth Comhairle na nOg Annual Conference

## REPRESENTATION

In addition to our National Executive Representative, Louth Comhairle now supports representatives on the National Youth Assembly, the National Assembly on Climate Change, LMETB Youth Committee, Louth County Council Climate Strategic Policy Committee and Comhairle na nOg Regional Networks. Representatives were also sent to the Dail na nOg event which was held in Leinster House on the 27th March 2024.

# Louth Public Participation Network (PPN)

- 2024 marked the 10-year anniversary since the formation of the 31 PPNs nationwide
- Membership increased from 541 community groups in 2023 to 618 community groups in 2024. The NOAC Report issued in September 2024 found that Louth PPN reported the largest increase in new Social Inclusion member groups in the Country (26.01% compared with the national average of 16.64%), reflecting an increased engagement with marginalised groups and communities across the County of Louth.
- Secretariat meetings were held on a monthly / 6-weekly-basis throughout the year.
- A re-structure of Louth PPN's Secretariat took place in mid-2024. The number of Secretariat members was reduced from 18 to 12 and a number of sub-committees were formed. The aim of the sub-committees is to focus the work of the Secretariat to meet the dynamic needs of member groups. The sub-committees formed are: Communications, Capacity Building, Community Engagement and Governance.
- Louth PPN consulted extensively with its members in 2024 to co-develop the Strategic Workplan 2025-2027. An online survey along with focus groups with members from more marginalised groups (e.g. new communities, disABILITY Louth, SICAP Older people, etc) were organised to ensure the needs of all Louth PPN members were recorded. The Strategic Workplan 2025-2027 formed the basis for the development of Louth PPN's Workplan and Budget for 2025 and all 3 documents were ratified at the October Plenary.

## TRAINING / CAPACITY BUILDING

Training and capacity building courses were delivered to PPN member groups both online and in-person in 2024.

Online training courses included:

Writing Effective Funding Applications

2 online courses, 28th February and 26th November. 91 members registered

Topics covered included: Writing funding applications, grant application process, avoiding failure, theory of change, how to write a Needs Statement, project budgets, collating supporting documents, funder selection criteria, monitoring and reporting

## Social Media

3 sessions held online on 29th April, 13th May & 20th May. 28 members registered.

Topics covered included: How digital marketing and social media can grow your organisation, introduction to Twitter (X) and Instagram, introduction to key Twitter and Instagram terminology and 'netiquette', setting up or improving your Twitter and Instagram account(s), how to write an effective Tweet/Instagram post and how to use hash tags, how to create a significant group of relevant followers, linking your Twitter feed with other social media to cross post, introduction to Facebook, Facebook terminology and 'netiquette', strategies for increasing the Likes on a page, learn how to use Facebook to build a brand's visibility, introduction to effective content writing, search engine optimisation & web analytics, introduction to key google search terminology and web analytics, how to improve organic search engine ranking, how to maximise the conversion of visitors to members, how to maintain search engine visibility over time, bringing it all together in an integrated strategy for your organisation.

## DIGITAL GRAPHIC DESIGN (CANVA)

1 online session held on 15th April. 28 members registered.

This online workshop provided participants with an insight into the world of graphic design, utilising the application Canva. Participants were shown how to create a Canva account, create eye-catching social media posts, design posters, create logos and improve the visual quality of their organisation's website.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE APPS AND SOFTWARE

1 online session held on 21st October. 40 members registered.

This course was an opportunity for PPN members to learn how to use a range of AI tools including ChatGPT, Microsoft Co-Pilot, Google Gemini, Leonardo, Runway, Synthesia and more.

# Louth Public Participation Network (PPN)

## NETWORKING

Six Municipal District (MD) Meetings were held in-person throughout 2024 as follows:

- Drogheda – 6th March and 26th September
- Ardee – 6th March and 25th September
- Dundalk – 4th March and 25th September

MD meetings are a great opportunity for members to network with other community groups, working within their geographic area while being informed of the work of the Secretariat of Louth PPN on their behalf (e.g. upcoming training opportunities, community-based projects, etc).

Two all-County Plenary Meetings were held as follows:

- Dundalk – 20th March
- Drogheda – October 17th

Plenary meetings allow PPN member groups to network with other community groups across the entire County. Numerous sections of the Local Authority were also in attendance and presented to PPN member groups on upcoming funding streams, consultations and resources and supports available to community groups. Louth PPN's 3-year Strategic Work Plan (2025-2027), Workplan 2025, Budget 2025 and the position of 15 of our community representatives were ratified at the October Plenary meeting which was held in Drogheda.

Louth PPN's Linkage Groups were active and met regularly throughout 2024. These groups included: Older People, Tidy Towns and Youth. Linkage Groups bring together community organisations with similar causes to discuss collective issues, pool resources and collaborate on projects within their different communities across the County.

Louth PPN's Community & Voluntary Awards took place on Tuesday November 5th in the Imperial Hotel in Dundalk. These awards are an opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge the fantastic work being carried out by community groups across the County. Louth PPN collaborated with Louth Volunteer Centre for these awards. Louth PPN's award recipients represented each of the 3 pillars membership and were as follows:

- Community & Voluntary – Cooley Community Alert
- Social Inclusion – Drogheda & District Support 4 Older People
- Environmental – Haggardstown Tidy Towns



Louth PPN Community & Voluntary Awards 2024 (November 5th)

## THEMATIC PROJECTS / ENGAGEMENT WITH MEMBER GROUPS

Louth PPN's Secretariat successfully delivered a number of thematic projects during 2024. The aim of these projects is to engage with different sectors of Louth's community, raise the profile of Louth PPN and provide opportunities for PPN member groups to network and collaborate. These projects included:

### Youth

This year's project involved the creation of an information service by youth members for youth members across the County including information on past-times (e.g. sports, music, arts, etc) alongside information videos and forms on health matters and practical supports. The youth e-Zine was launched at the Comhairle na nOg AGM on 14th November and the first issue was very well received. It is intended to continue the issue of this e-Zine into 2025 and beyond.

# Louth Public Participation Network (PPN)

## INTERCULTURAL SPORTS

The aim of this project was to help integrate members of County Louth's new communities through the medium of sport. A family activity day was organised in Dundalk Sports Centre in 2023 and in 2024 the Secretariat wished to host a similar event in Drogheda. This activity day was held on Monday August 5th and was well attended by members from all cultures and backgrounds. Activities included basketball, volleyball, badminton, tennis, football, rugby, handball, cricket and games for children.

## ART FOR ALL

This was a collaborative project between three PPN member groups (disABILITY Louth, AAEX and the Arches Club in Dundalk) and provided a 10-week drop-in art course for members of the Arches Club and other community groups and members to avail of. Each week attendees were given an opportunity to explore different modes of art and materials (e.g. paints, crafts, pottery, etc). This project was deemed to be very successful with a week-on-week increase in the number of attendees and an exhibition of pieces of the art produced at the end of the 10-week course.

## COMMUNITY PEER-TO-PEER MENTORING

This project commenced in 2023 with the training of 13 community mentors. The Secretariat wished to continue to offer this support to PPN members throughout 2024. The aim of this project is to share the vast wealth of knowledge and experience which currently exists across the community and voluntary sector of County Louth with other community groups within Louth PPN's membership. Mentors have prior experience and knowledge through working within community organisations and offer mentoring to other PPN groups in areas such as Committee Skills (including governance, law and HR), Funding Applications, Activity / Event Management and Social Media. It is intended to continue offering this support to PPN members into 2025 and beyond.



Intercultural Sports Project (August 5th)

## REPRESENTATION

With the calling of a local election in May 2024, all existing SPCs were dissolved. A draft 2024-2029 SPC Scheme was issued by Louth County Council in August with an invitation to all for comment. Louth PPN made a submission, requesting (amongst other things) an increase in the number of community representatives from the proposed number of 11 (the national aim of PPNs is to have at least 1 representative from each of the 3 PPN pillars sitting on each of the SPCs, which in Louth's situation would equate to 15 community representatives overall). Louth County Council revised the 2024-2029 SPC Scheme, offering 19 community representative seats to Louth PPN. Subsequent to this, Louth PPN sought nominations from its membership and 18 of the 19 community representative seats were filled (1 vacancy remains from the environmental pillar).

A meeting of all Louth PPN Community Representatives (i.e. those sitting on the Secretariat, SPCs, partnerships and other boards and committees within the structure of the local authority) took place on Monday November 18th. The aim of this meeting was to introduce all representatives to each other, review the remit of each of the boards / committees, discuss collective issues of concern within Louth's community and how these issues may be progressed within the structures of the Local Authority and to identify any training or supports the community representatives require to carry out their representative role. It is intended to hold one of these representative meetings once per quarter going forward.

With 2024 being the year of both a Local and a General Election, Louth PPN offered a suite of workshops for members focussing on electorate education, particularly for those from more marginalised sectors of the community.

Two Active Citizenship workshops took place on the 1st and 8th May in both Drogheda and Dundalk with 26 participants. These workshops covered topics including:

- Local Government functions
- Voting rights – who has rights to vote in which type of election
- How to register on the electoral register to ensure your voice is counted
- Local versus National versus Global issues – how to ensure your personal priorities are matched with the right candidate.
- Different types of active community participation, including what the PPN is and how to get involved.

# Louth Public Participation Network (PPN)

An in-person advocacy training workshop was held in collaboration with Louth Local Development on 30th September in Monasterboice with 72 participants. The aim of this workshop was to provide participants with the skills required to be effective community advocates for local and national issues affecting their communities. This workshop taught participants valuable information such as:

- How to access local and national decision-making processes (including the PPN)
- How to engage with local councillors, TDs, Senators and the legislative process
- How the legislative process works, from grassroots to action
- How to develop an advocacy plan
- How to campaign alongside service provision priorities
- How best to communicate messages and priorities and who are the most important contacts and connections to make
- Understanding lobbying – what are the rules and what is the potential for the community



Advocacy Training (September 30th)

For further information on Louth PPN please visit our website: [www.louthppn.ie](http://www.louthppn.ie) or sign up to our weekly newsletter (the Friday Communique).



# Healthy Louth

The Louth Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) plays a central role in overseeing and guiding the work of Healthy Louth, ensuring that health and wellbeing initiatives align with national policy objectives and local priorities. Under the governance of the LCDC, Healthy Louth is responsible for delivering the Healthy Ireland Fund 2023-2025 programme, which funds targeted projects that promote physical and mental health, social inclusion and community engagement.

The Louth LCDC Health & Wellbeing Sub-committee acts as a strategic driver for these efforts, conducting regular reviews, fostering collaboration among stakeholders, and supporting funding applications to sustain and expand community health initiatives. The sub-committee ensures that Healthy Louth initiatives address the health and wellbeing needs of all residents, particularly priority groups, including children, adolescents, disadvantaged families and individuals at risk of homelessness.

## HEALTHY IRELAND FUND 2023-2025

Healthy Ireland is a government led initiative aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of everyone in Ireland. It adopts a 'whole-of-government' and 'whole-of-society' approach to deliver four key goals:

1. Increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life.
2. Reduce health inequalities.
3. Protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing.
4. Create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a Healthy Ireland.

Following public consultation, funding in Louth has been allocated to initiatives supporting:

- Increase in an individual's level of positive mental health as per Energy and Vitality Index
- Increase in percentage of adults & children meeting physical activity guidelines
- Delivering targeted health promotion campaigns to raise awareness and encourage community participation in wellbeing initiatives.

These initiatives address the needs of the general population and priority groups, including adolescents, disadvantaged families, individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness and those with mental health concerns.

## HEALTHY IRELAND FUND — TOP 3 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

1. Healthy Ireland Fund as a Catalyst for Growth – The Healthy Ireland Fund (HIF) has served as essential seed funding, enabling the launch of multiple successful initiatives. These projects have since secured significant additional funding, demonstrating sustainability and long-term impact.
  - The Take 5 for Positive Mental Health initiative led to the Dear Future Me campaign, which has evolved into a standalone project with €140,000 in funding from Creative Ireland, Creative Wellbeing in the Community, Shared Island Fund.
  - Work with homeless and at-risk populations, supported through HIF, has resulted in strengthened partnerships with Peter McVerry House and Dundalk Simon, leading to an additional €15,000 from Creative Ireland for the Step into My World project, which raises awareness of homelessness through real-life experiences.
  - The success of our engagement with homeless services has also secured €5,000 from Dundalk MD Councillors to bring the Irish Homeless Street League to Louth, with an additional funding application recently submitted to align the league with a Health Literacy Programme of activities to address the health literacy needs of the target group.
2. Increased Participation in Mental Health and Physical Activity Initiatives – There has been a measurable increase in individuals engaging with Healthy Louth's community-based mental health and physical activity support programmes.
3. Expansion of Targeted Initiatives – Programmes such as Take 5 for Positive Mental Health, LLDC's Mental Health Matters & Family Matters Programme, the Boomerang Youth 'Minding Your Mind' project and physical activity projects like Boxing Clever, Sailing into Wellness, Fun Fitness, High Five Programme, Football Crazy, and DkIT initiatives (ex-HER-cise, DkIT's Fittest STEPS Challenge, and Sport as a Tool for Inclusion) have made significant strides.

## HEALTHY IRELAND FUND — KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN 2024

### Expansion of the 'We're Breastfeeding Friendly Louth' Campaign

The 'We're Breastfeeding Friendly Louth' campaign made significant strides in 2024, with several key developments that have furthered its impact in the community.

# Healthy Louth

Highlights include:

- **Launch of New HSE-led Breastfeeding Support Group in Dunleer:** A major milestone during National Breastfeeding Week 2024 was the launch of a new HSE-led breastfeeding support group in Dunleer. This group builds on the success of Dunleer's designation as the first 'Breastfeeding Friendly Village' in Louth in 2023. The launch of the support group offers new mothers a vital space for guidance, advice, and connection. The launch event, supported by the Healthy Ireland Fund, was a central part of National Breastfeeding Week celebrations here in Louth.
- **County-wide Promotional Drive 2024:** Throughout 2024, dynamic, county-wide promotional campaign aimed at raising awareness and normalising breastfeeding was implemented. Events in Dundalk and Drogheda featured breastfeeding workshops, information sessions and networking opportunities for parents and healthcare professionals.

These efforts have contributed to building a stronger, more supportive community for breastfeeding across Louth, setting the stage for further growth of the campaign in the years ahead.



'We're Breastfeeding Friendly Louth' Campaign



# Healthy Louth

## 'THE FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING: OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH IN LOUTH' EVENT

The 'Five Ways to Wellbeing: Opportunities for Community Health in Louth' event, organised by Louth Social Prescribing Committee, took place at the Fairways Hotel, Dundalk on the 23rd October 2024 and marked the official launch of the CommUnity Connect Louth & Meath '5 Ways to Wellbeing' Resource. This initiative aims to support individuals, groups and communities in taking simple, practical steps to enhance their wellbeing.

The event showcased over 30 stands from local organisations, health services, voluntary and community groups, each offering valuable information and resources for improving mental, physical and social wellbeing. The focus was on the five key principles of the '5 Ways to Wellbeing Framework: Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give. These principles, embedded in

the resource, are designed to encourage positive changes and promote long-term wellbeing within the community.

The launch of this resource represents a significant step forward in Healthy Louth's ongoing efforts to improve the wellbeing of residents and strengthen community ties. The resource offers accessible and actionable advice for people of all ages and backgrounds to incorporate wellbeing practices into their daily lives.

For more information click the link below:

<https://www.louthcoco.ie/en/services/community/programmes/healthy-louth/community-connect/>



'The Five Ways to Wellbeing: Opportunities for Community Health in Louth' Event, Fairways Hotel, Dundalk

# Healthy Louth

## 'NOT AROUND US' CAMPAIGN – SMOKE & VAPE-FREE SPACES

A key milestone in 2024 was the collaboration with Dundalk FC to integrate the 'Not Around Us' (NAU) campaign into matchday events, halftime activities and club social media. The campaign encourages businesses, schools, and community spaces to create smoke and vape-free environments, particularly in places frequented by children and young people.



'Not Around Us' Campaign

## RECOGNITION AT THE ALL-IRELAND COMMUNITY & COUNCIL AWARDS

Healthy Louth's 'Mental Health Matters' Project was shortlisted for 'Best Mental Health' initiative at the 2024 LAMA All-Ireland Community & Council Awards.

The awards ceremony took place at the Royal Convention Centre in Dublin on Saturday 17th February 2024, where representatives from Louth County Council and Louth Local Development Company, Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) attended.

The 'Mental Health Matters' initiative is a collaboration between Healthy Louth and SICAP. It has been recognised for its innovative approach to promoting mental well-being within the community. Through workshops, events, and outreach programmes, the initiative has:

- Raised awareness about mental health issues.
- Reduced stigma around seeking support.
- Provided valuable resources to those in need.

This award recognition highlights the commitment of Healthy Louth and Louth Local Development Company in addressing mental health challenges and promoting well-being across the county.



Pictured at the LAMA Awards 2024, Ms. Alison Quail, Chair of the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), Ms. Paula Keenan, Healthy Louth Co-ordinator, Louth County Council, Mr. Finbar Gethins, SEO – Community Section, Louth County Council, Ms. Ina McCrumlish, Project Co-ordinator, SICAP, Louth Local Development Company

# Healthy Louth

## COMMUNICATIONS & AWARENESS IN 2024

Healthy Louth continued to expand its digital presence and communication efforts, ensuring that health and wellbeing messages reached the wider community.

- Healthy Louth Newsletter
  - » The Healthy Louth bi-monthly newsletter continues to be distributed through The Louth PPN Friday communiqué, as well as social media and direct email networks.
  - » Topics covered included mental health, physical activity, nutrition, workplace wellbeing, and support services.
- Social Media Growth & Engagement
  - » Campaigns such as 'We're Breastfeeding Friendly Louth', 'Not Around Us', and CommUnity Connect Louth & Meath initiatives were actively promoted.

## LAUNCH OF 'DEAR FUTURE ME' – €140,000 MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

Healthy Louth secured €140,000 in funding for its innovative positive mental health initiative, "Dear Future Me." This funding, awarded through the Creative Health and Wellbeing in the Community, Shared Island Fund, will support the project over two years (2024-2025).

In partnership with Dundalk Youth Centre and the Magnet Centre in Newry, this initiative will implement transformative mental health programmes for young people aged 10-18 across Louth, Newry, Mourne, and Down.

Programme Highlights:

- Tackling loneliness, isolation and poor mental health through creative activities.
- Workshops in art therapy, videography, performing arts and cooking for wellness.
- Outdoor activities such as 'Top of the World Hiking' and 'Picnic in the Park' events.
- 'Dear Future Me' community events where young people will showcase their achievements and engage in community events.

## 'STEP INTO MY WORLD' – EMPOWERING HOMELESS VOICES THROUGH ART

Healthy Louth, in collaboration with Louth Local Development Company (LLDC) and Louth County Council's Homeless Section, has secured €15,000 from



Mr. Kevin Moran, Dundalk Youth Centre, Ms. Paula Keenan, Healthy Louth Co-ordinator, Louth County Council & Ms. Teresa Kearney, Manager, Magnet Youth Centre, Newry

Creative Ireland to deliver 'Step Into My World', an innovative project aimed at amplifying the voices and experiences of individuals affected by homelessness.

Key Objectives of the Project:

- Providing a creative platform for those in Direct Provision, women's refuge centres, homeless shelters and addiction recovery services.
- Using art therapy and storytelling to help participants express their realities and challenges.
- Recording personal narratives that will be shared with the wider community.
- Creating a collaborative art piece to be publicly displayed.

The project aims to raise awareness and reduce stigma around homelessness, while fostering empathy and understanding throughout the broader community.



Ms. Ina McCrumlish, Project Co-ordinator, SICAP, LLDC, Ms. Paula Keenan, Healthy Louth Co-ordinator & Ms. Maeve Harkin, Social Inclusion Manager, LLDC

# Louth Local Sports Partnership

Louth Local Sports Partnership (LLSP) plays a vital role in fostering a healthier, more physically active society within Co. Louth. As a key component of the Sports Unit within Louth County Council and operating under the strategic guidance of Sport Ireland, Louth LSP is at the heart of community engagement in sport and physical activity. Our remit is broad, yet focused to make sport and physical activity accessible, inclusive, and sustainable for people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities.

We work with individuals, community organisations, local sports clubs, schools, and statutory agencies to identify need and respond with targeted, effective initiatives. This collaborative approach ensures that our work is deeply rooted in the needs of the local population and aligned with national sport, health and well-being goals.

Our work is organised across four strategic pillars:

- 1. Participation** – We aim to ensure that every individual in County Louth has access to sport and physical activity opportunities, regardless of age, gender, ability, or background.
- 2. Sustainable Infrastructures** – We support the development of long-term sports infrastructures including facilities, community groups, and sports clubs.
- 3. Education and Training** – We empower coaches, volunteers, and community leaders by providing them with the knowledge and skills needed to deliver safe, high-quality, and inclusive participation opportunities.
- 4. Information Hub** – We act as a central source of information and resources for sports participation and healthy living throughout the county.

## OVERVIEW OF 2024 ACTIVITIES

The year 2024 was one of growth, innovation, and deepened community engagement for Louth Local Sports Partnership. Over the course of the year, we delivered a total of 534 programmes, events, initiatives, and workshops, marking a new high in the scale of our activity and outreach.

These programmes collectively reached 21,705 participants, reflecting a significant year on year increase and demonstrating the effectiveness of our outreach strategies and community collaboration. This increase is not simply about numbers, it reflects a growing trust in our services, a growing appetite for active lifestyles in the county, and the strength of the partnerships we have nurtured.

Breakdown of key participation figures:

### 9,536 youth participants

A testament to our investment in youth engagement, school partnerships, and leadership development programmes.

### 5,202 female participants

Reflecting strong engagement through initiatives such as Her Moves, HER Outdoors Week, and female-led training.

### 3,672 teenage female participants

Addressing one of sport's most significant challenges—retaining teenage girls in physical activity—through targeted, supportive programming.

### 2,168 participants with disabilities

Demonstrating LLSP's commitment to inclusivity and the success of initiatives such as disability cycling, Football for All, and inclusive training for coaches and volunteers.

These figures represent not only the volume of engagement but also the diversity and depth of our impact. Our work continues to evolve in response to changing community needs, and we are proud to see growth in every key demographic group.

## PARTICIPATION

LLSP's core mission of increasing physical activity participation was brought to life through the delivery of 404 tailored initiatives in 2024. These initiatives were hosted across various environments to ensure accessibility, such as sports clubs, community groups, primary and secondary schools, community centres, greenways, parks, and virtual platforms.

Key activities included a diverse array of options, ranging from Outdoor Adventure Sports such as Kayaking, Orienteering, Hill Walking, SUP, and Open Water Swimming, to Team Sports like GAA, Soccer, Basketball, and Rugby. This not only encouraged physical activity but also promoted social skills, teamwork, and resilience.

Health & Physical Activity initiatives such as Yoga, Pilates, Nordic Walking, and Activator Walking supported both physical and mental well-being. Importantly, we also expanded our Inclusive Sports programmes with options like GAA All Stars, Football for All, Inclusive Orienteering, and Disability Cycling.

These initiatives were delivered with an understanding of participants' needs and barriers, ensuring welcoming, supportive environments for people of all backgrounds.

# Louth Local Sports Partnership

## SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURES

In 2024, LLSP continued its commitment to building robust, inclusive sports infrastructures in County Louth that will support participation for years to come.

We distributed **€63,000 in grant funding** through various mechanisms, including:

- **Small Club Grant Scheme:** Provided critical financial support for equipment and programme development.
- **Volunteer Support Funding:** Assisted clubs in recruiting, training, and retaining volunteers.
- **Programme Funding:** Enabled the rollout of new or expanded physical activity initiatives at the grassroots level.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

To strengthen the volunteer and coaching capacity in sports clubs and community groups across Co. Louth, Louth LSP facilitated 92 training workshops and courses throughout 2024.

Courses offered included:

- Safeguarding Training (Levels 1, 2, 3)
- Disability Inclusion and Autism in Sport
- Coaching Teenage Girls
- Coaching Children
- Youth Leadership
- Physical Activity Leader (PALS) Training
- Learn to Cycle
- Walk Leader Training

## INFORMATION HUB

LLSP operates as a comprehensive information and guidance centre for sport and physical activity in the county.

Communications highlights during 2024 included:

- **92,811** website visitors
- **4,098** Facebook followers
- **843** Instagram followers
- **12** feature articles and adverts published in local press
- **5** physical activity guide booklets produced and distributed to community centres, schools, and health partners



Ref 1 – Participants on Night Hike in Cooley Mountains as part of HER Outdoors 2024



Ref 2 – Beach Yoga on Port Beach as part of HER Outdoors 2024



Ref 3 – Local School Children using the Carlingford Greenway during Bike Week



Ref 4 – Local Children taking part in a Bike Safety workshop as part of Bike Week 2024

# Louth Local Sports Partnership



Ref 5 – Teenagers participating in Level 1 Award in Sports Leadership in Dundalk Sports Centre



Ref 9: Girls participating in the 2024 Louth School Girls League Finals.



Ref 6: Audience in attendance at the 2024 Louth LSP Volunteer in Sport Awards



Ref 10: Coaches who completed Disability Inclusion Training through Louth LSP



Ref 7: Award winner on stage with Oireana Lawless Chair of Louth LSP, Cllr John Reilly, & Louise Burke Sport Ireland.



Ref 11: Children taking part in a GAA For All session in Roche Emmets GFC



Ref 8: Members of Connect FRC Drogheda Walking Group who completed their Walk Leader Training. 4



Ref 11: Children taking part in a GAA For All session in Roche Emmets GFC

# Louth Local Sports Partnership



## LOUTH SPORTS FACILITIES 2024

In 2024, Louth County Council's Sports Facilities continued to deliver on their mission to provide inclusive, high-quality sporting and physical activity opportunities for all members of the community. A significant increase in participation across all age groups reflects the continued growth, vibrancy, and relevance of the services offered. This report reflects on the significant participation growth, programme successes, capital developments, and inclusive community engagement initiatives across our facilities.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND PARTICIPATION HIGHLIGHTS:

- Active Adult Programmes (50+) and Children's Basketball each attracted over 12,000 participants.
- Fitness Classes and Multi-Sport Activities for individuals with disabilities engaged more than 6,000 attendees each.
- At Lourdes Athletic Stadium, over 2,500 casual track users and 2,000 fitness class attendees reflected robust community engagement.

The overall statistics are a testament to the positive public response to our inclusive and well-structured programmes.

### Dundalk Sports Centre

Children's participation in Soccer Activities	4,000
Adult's participation in Soccer Activities	700
Children's participation in Athletics Sessions	320
Children's participation in multi-sports Activities (after-schools activities/camps)	3,600
Individuals with a disability participate in Multi Sports Activities	6,000
Participation in Fitness Classes	6,000
Active Adult Programmes for 50+	12,000
Children's Participation in Basketball	12,000
Casual Users, e.g., Table tennis, Pickle ball and Badminton, Tennis	3,000

### Lourdes Athletic Stadium

Casual Track users	2,500
Bowling Green users	1,500
Clubs and Groups Facilitated	800
Fitness Classes	2,000

## NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS) AWARD

Dundalk Sports Centre has achieved an Outstanding (Gold) NQS Award for the sixth year running and seventh award in eight years. The National Quality Standard Award is given to facilities that meet the operational standards for leisure and fitness facilities across 250 quality-based criteria. The standard is designed to encourage continuous improvement within the sector and recognises facilities for their remarkable standards in the areas of safety, hygiene, customer service and human resources. The NQS award is the only industry specific award for the leisure, health and fitness sector in Ireland.



Active Dance Participants with Instructor Leading Session



40+ Older Adults Participating in An Active Ageing Session

Ref 17: Participating in a Strength & Balance Session in Dundalk Sports Centre



60+ Older Adults during a Chair Yoga Session



Lourdes Stadium Upgrade Works in Progress During 2024.



Overview of Lourdes Stadium Upgrade Works Completed in 2024

## LOURDES ATHLETIC STADIUM

### Key Events at Lourdes Stadium

- **Bowls Events:** Four major events were held in 2024, starting with the inaugural one on May 29th.
- **Louth Community Games (May 25):** Hosted children's athletics competitions in partnership with local clubs.
- **Sport Uile Launch (November):** Attended by Minister Thomas Byrne, this initiative promotes inclusion and growth through sport.

### CAPITAL WORKS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

2024 saw significant investment in the Lourdes Stadium:

- **New Storage Shed (Jan–Feb):** Custom storage for athletics and maintenance equipment.
- **MUGA Installation (March):** Facilitates Bootcamps and outdoor fitness.
- **Studio and Reception Renovation (May–August):** New studio supports classes and provides social space.
- **Accessible Toilets:** Added in April with support from Louth LSP, improving facility access.

- **Reception Enhancements:** Final upgrades in August created a more welcoming and secure environment.

To kick start the new year Capital Works began at track level, with building the new storage shed which is situated behind the 110m start. The building of the shed lasted from January to February. The new storage shed holds all athletics, bowls and maintenance equipment. In addition, it contains storage cages for each club within the community to store their own athletics equipment. In March the stadium moved towards the investment of the MUGA (Multi- Use, Games Area), which now hosts the Outdoor Bootcamp. April seen all outdoor Capital works completed moving into may where all indoor work began. Indoors the Stadium seen a new studio room and reception built. The now studio room that was formally a storage room for all athletics equipment is a fully functional space that now caters for Strength and Balance and our Bowlers for a cup of tea. Finishing off the summer months, new outdoor toilets were installed with the disability toilet funded by the Local Sports Partnership, they have been a great addition to the facility, especially during club bookings. August seen the final finishing touches being put in place with the reception area having been upgraded with new shutters and a hatch.

# Environment

## LITTER ENFORCEMENT

There are 6 full time litter wardens in County Louth and in 2024, 1,579 litter investigations and patrols were completed. Enforcement action is undertaken where evidence is detected from these investigations. The litter wardens continue to investigate all reports received by Louth County Council of littering and illegal dumping within urban and rural areas. They also continue to engage with businesses advising on litter mitigation measures and actively patrolling litter hot spots. Illegal signage is also removed and fixed penalty notices issued accordingly.

## WASTE ENFORCEMENT

Louth County Council Waste Enforcement Officers continued to investigate waste complaints and illegal waste cases in 2024.

There were three schemes undertaken in Co. Louth under the 2024 "Anti-Dumping Initiative" which included a Mattress and Sofa Amnesty Event in three areas of Co. Louth including Dundalk, Drogheda and Ardee. A total grant allocation of €76,800 was approved for Louth County Council to carry out these projects. Louth County Council successfully collecting 2,144 mattresses and 2,090 sofas during these events.

A total of 5 multi-agency checkpoints were held in 2024, in conjunction with An Garda Síochána, the NTFSO and the RSA. These checkpoints are used by Waste Enforcement staff to check the transportation of waste both within County Louth and across the border with Northern Ireland.

The Deposit Return Scheme came live on the 1st February 2024.

The Waste Management and Environment Section are responsible for the enforcement of the legislation underpinning the scheme. The team must ensure all obligated premises are compliant with the requirements of the legislation which include:

- Take back scheme in place
- Only selling products displaying the logo
- Registered with the approved body



Other waste enforcement activities undertaken in 2024 included:

- Removal of hazardous diesel sludge that is dumped throughout the county at various locations
- Investigation of Construction and Demolition complaints and cases
- Inspection and validation of Waste Collection Permits, Waste Facility Permits and Certificates of Registration
- Review of Article 27 notifications
- Inspection of End-of-Life Vehicle Facilities
- Inspection of Authorised Treatment Facilities
- Management of Civic Amenity sites
- Enforcement of the Segregation, Storage and Presentation of Household and Commercial Waste Bye-Laws

# Air, Noise and Water Quality Regulation

## AIR AND NOISE REGULATION

There are 6 full time litter wardens in County Louth and in 2024, 1,579 litter investigations and patrols were completed. Enforcement action is undertaken where evidence is detected from these investigations. The litter wardens continue to investigate all reports received by Louth County Council of littering and illegal dumping within urban and rural areas. They also continue to engage with businesses advising on litter mitigation measures and actively patrolling litter hot spots. Illegal signage is also removed and fixed penalty notices issued accordingly.

In 2024, Louth County Council continue to populate their solid fuel register which was established with the aim of identifying all merchants, retailers and producers of Solid Fuels in the Co. Louth area and to list all products being sold. To grow this register, inspections were focused mainly on the smaller rural villages which were not previously inspected or covered by the smoky coal ban and who may not have been aware of the previous low smoke ban being in place. This allowed us to establish a register of retailers who were not previously inspected or identified as potential suppliers of solid fuels. Our focus in these areas and on new retailers allowed Louth County Council to raise awareness of the Solid Fuel Regulations 2022 and to highlight the retailer producer responsibilities under the Regulations. In 2024, Louth County Council carried out inspections which included a mix of Service Stations, Supermarkets, Shops, Hardware/DIY Stores and Merchants. There appeared to be an improved awareness of the Solid Fuel Regulations among retailers in comparison to the previous year inspections. Overall good compliance with the Regulations was noted during all inspections.

Ambient air monitoring continued in Dundalk and Drogheda, in conjunction with the EPA. All the results for air quality monitoring carried out in both towns have shown to comply with the Air Quality Standards for 2024. Additional air monitoring was undertaken in Greenore Port. Additional inspections were conducted under the Deco Paints, Solvents and Petroleum Vapours Regulations. A new Noise Action Plan (Round 4 2024 – 2029) was put in place by Louth County Council in July 2024, following a period of public consultation and presentation of the draft plan to members of Louth County Council. An Appropriate Assessment screening and a Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment screening was also conducted as part of the Noise Action Plan development in early 2024.

## WATER QUALITY

A total of 59 farm inspections were undertaken in 2024 plus additional inspections in relation to agricultural spreading and odour complaints. Four farms were referred for cross compliance and one legal action was initiated under the Good Agricultural Practice Regulations 2022. 12 Septic tank inspections were undertaken in 2024, which included a pre-meeting with the homeowners in addition to a full on-site inspection. In 2024, Louth County Council had 31 active Section 4 Discharge licences, which were inspected and audited throughout the year. Legal action is on-going against four non-compliant Section 4 Licences and improvement works are on-going. Additional water quality monitoring undertaken in 2024 consisted of 153 river samples being taken by Environment staff for operational and investigative monitoring in chosen catchments. There was a total of 104 water pollution complaints received and closed out during 2024 also. There are 4 designated beaches within County Louth, namely Templetown, Port, Clogherhead and Seapoint. The bathing season for 2024 commenced on the 1st of June and finished on the 30th of September with 148 samples taken. There were Prohibition Notices issued for the Seapoint beach on the 6th of June, 27th of July and 21st of August 2024. There was also a temporary prohibition notice place on Clogherhead beach on the 4th of September 2024 due to a non-compliant water sample which was attributed to heavy rainfall and associated runoff. Subsequent sampling in all cases confirmed that the parameters returned to within their limits after the weather event had occurred. These non-compliances were investigated in line with the bathing Water protocol, the EDEN portal was continually updated, notices were placed on the beach and all relevant agencies were continually informed of the incident as it progressed.





# The European & Cross Border Office



The Peace Committee, which is a sub-committee of the LCDC, oversees both the PEACE IV and PEACEPLUS Programmes.

## PEACE IV PROGRAMME

Peace IV projects have been supported by the European Union's PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special European Programmes Body (SEUPB) and supported locally by Louth County Council and Louth Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). Match-funding has been provided by The Executive Office in Northern Ireland and the Department for Rural and Community Development in Ireland.

The final PEACE IV newsletter was circulated on 17th June 2024.

Information on all PEACE IV projects undertaken has been updated on the Louth County Council website at <https://www.louthcoco.ie/en/services/economic-development/peace-iv/>

A brochure detailing all PEACE IV projects is available to view at the following link - <https://www.louthcoco.ie/en/services/sustainable-energy-cross-border-european-relations/peace-iv/news-events/lcc-peace-iv-programme-book-final.pdf>

The Peace office also provided information to ongoing, routine audits of the PEACE IV programme by SEUPB.

## PEACEPLUS PROGRAMME 2021-2027



PEACEPLUS is the new European Union Funding programme designed to support peace and prosperity across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland, building upon the work of the previous PEACE and INTERREG Programmes. The programme's design emphasises not only peace-building efforts but also initiatives that will positively impact the economy, foster prosperity and adapt to the evolving challenges and environment we face.

The Louth County Council Action Plan, submitted under PEACEPLUS Investment area 1.1, has been allocated €4.6 million under three themes:

**Theme 1:** Local Community Regeneration and Transformation - 40% of the budget

**Theme 2:** Thriving and Peaceful Communities - 39% of the budget

**Theme 3:** Celebrating Cultures and Diversity - 21% of the budget



Wreath Laying Ceremony at the PEACE IV War Memorial in Dundalk

# The European & Cross Border Office

## PEACEPLUS ACTION PLAN

The Final Draft PEACEPLUS Action Plan was adopted by the PEACEPLUS Partnership at their Committee meeting on the 6th February 2024.

It was subsequently approved by the Louth Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) on the 19th February 2024 and was noted at a meeting of Louth County Council on the 25th March 2024. The Action Plan was submitted to the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) on 28th March 2024.



County Louth PEACEPLUS Partnership Committee meeting on 6th February 2024

## PEACEPLUS PROCUREMENT

Work was ongoing throughout 2024 to ensure that the procurement process used to deliver the two PEACEPLUS capital projects and recruitment of delivery agents for the fifteen other PEACEPLUS projects, fully complies with Office of Government Procurement (OGP) and SEUPB regulations. To achieve this objective, a PEACEPLUS procurement plan was drafted and published on the Louth County Council website. Invitations were issued to recruit members to various tender assessment panels. An online procurement information meeting was organised for prospective tenders in November and its guidance notes published on the Louth County Council website.

There are 2 capital projects proposed Under Theme 1: Community Regeneration and Transformation. These are works to improve accessibility and information at the Battle of the Boyne site, Drogheda and the rejuvenation of St Nicholas Church, Dundalk.

The Planning Office was requested to carry out an appropriate assessment of the Battle of the Boyne site. Additionally, Grade 1 Conservation Architect Cathal Crimmins was appointed to advance the project to Stage 2 of the planning application for the refurbishment of Saint Nicholas Church of Ireland, Dundalk, which is a protected structure of regional significance.



Saint Nicholas Church of Ireland, Dundalk



# Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT)

The Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT) was established in November 2023 to support the integration of migrants across County Louth. The team comprises an Integration Support Coordinator, two Integration Support Workers, and an Administrator.

LAIT's core mission is to assist:

- Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BOTPs)
- International Protection Applicants (IPAs)
- Programme Refugees

- Individuals with Refugee, Subsidiary Protection, or Permission to Remain status

The team works in close collaboration with statutory agencies and service providers to enhance access to mainstream services in areas such as health, education, employment, and community engagement.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024

### JANUARY 2024

- Completion of the Directory of Services for County Louth, covering key services including health, education, employment, and community supports.
- Commenced staff training, starting with Suicide Awareness and Cultural Awareness.

### FEBRUARY 2024

- Launched LAIT-hosted clinics for IP residents, beginning at the Gateway Hotel, Dundalk.
- Participated in Human Trafficking and Trauma-Informed Practice training in collaboration with LAIT teams in Wicklow, Fingal, and Meath.

### MARCH 2024

- Initiated Information Sessions for residents at the Gateway Hotel.
- Hosted a session with the Migrant Advocacy Service on the IPO system.
- Supported the opening of the D Hotel in Drogheda as a new transitional hub for IPAs, engaging directly with management to outline LAIT's support role.

### APRIL 2024

- Partnered with Intreo to deliver a Work and Skills Fair at the Imperial Hotel, Dundalk, targeting migrant job seekers.
- Attended the first national LGMA LAIT in-person event in Tullamore for shared learning and team-building.

### MAY 2024

- Organised a networking event for accommodation providers at Dundalk Sports Centre, facilitating discussion on challenges and collaboration.
- Co-developed a personal development programme with Louth Local Development Company (LLDC) to support IP residents ineligible for work permits, focusing on upskilling and job readiness.

### JUNE 2024

- Celebrated Refugee Week by hosting coffee mornings at the main libraries in County Louth, offering a platform for residents to share their stories.
- Visited Matthew McGreehan's social farm in the Cooley Mountains. IP residents participating in the social farming programme have benefited greatly from the experience.

### JULY 2024

- Partnered with Dundalk FC for a 4-week football coaching programme for IP residents from the Carnbeg Hotel, led by First Team Coach Liam Burns. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

### SEPTEMBER 2024

- Held Information Sessions in the Drogheda and Dundalk libraries focused on employment rights for migrants, with strong attendance and engagement.

**OCTOBER 2024**

- Co-hosted a Work and Skills Fair in partnership with the Department of Social Protection at the Marcy Hotel, Drogheda.
- Attended LLDC's presentation celebrating IP applicants who completed training courses such as manual handling, Safe Pass, and QQI healthcare qualifications. Many participants reported increased confidence and job readiness.

**NOVEMBER 2024**

- Delivered a second round of Information Sessions in local libraries focused on Road Safety, in collaboration with An Garda Síochána and the Road Safety Authority. Attendees also experienced a driving simulator demonstration.
- Supported AkiDwA's Health & Wellness Fair at Dundalk Sports Centre, offering medical screenings and health information to IPAS and BOTP residents.

**DECEMBER 2024**

- Featured on Dundalk FM alongside key stakeholders, celebrating the contributions of migrants in County Louth and highlighting integration efforts throughout the year.
- Attended the "We Are Human" book launch hosted by LLDC, showcasing real-life stories from individuals who sought refuge in Ireland. The authors, Leah O'Shaughnessy and Melanie Martin, inspired attendees and may be hosted again in 2025.

**SERVICE DELIVERY OVERVIEW**

- Clinics Held: 100
- Clients Supported: 708

LAIT remains committed to creating an inclusive, supportive environment where all newcomers feel valued and empowered to thrive in County Louth.



# 3



# Social Development

The Social Development Directorate is responsible for delivering Housing and Cultural Services.

Housing delivers a range of services which aim to provide quality social housing in sustainable communities. Services include housing allocations, tenancy support services & estate management, rents & loans administration, homelessness services, housing grants and maintenance. The implementation of the social housing capital delivery programme as set out in the Housing Delivery Action Plan and Housing for All, and the energy efficiency retrofit programme, are also key functions of the section.

Cultural Services provide accessible and inclusive services via the County Library branch network and our continually improving and innovative online and digital services. A wide range of Arts initiatives are supported and developed by way of direct and collaborative delivery models. The County Archives and County Museum provide a range of services including historical exhibits and events, research services, and archival records management.



# Housing

## HOUSING

The Government's 'Housing for All' plan outlines targets for local authority housing delivery. Louth County Council is currently exceeding the target of just over 1,300 newly constructed units and will continue to do so up to the end of the plan in 2026. 78% of the social housing delivery target has already been delivered with a significant number of units to be delivered in 2025 and 2026. Louth County Council works with all partners to facilitate a sustainable housing strategy to meet the housing needs of the people of the county.

## Housing Services at a glance:

**438** new homes delivered

**683** homes allocated

**2,873** HAP tenancies supported

**€15,948,958** in rental income

**7,047** home repairs carried out

**150** energy efficiency retrofits completed

**170** anti-social behaviour investigations

# Housing

## HOUSING DELIVERY (SOCIAL)

In 2024 under the 'Housing for All' plan, Louth County Council delivered 438 new housing units throughout the county. These new housing units were delivered via a range of measures including direct local authority construction, turnkey acquisitions, acquisitions to meet specific social housing needs, long-term leasing, Part V's acquisitions, and in partnership with Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs).

In June, Louth County Council welcomed the completion of 2 new A-rated energy efficient homes in Gort Uaine, Clogherhead and School Lane, Dunleer. These housing units comprised a mix of 3 and 4 bed houses (bungalow and two storey).



Gort Uaine, Clogherhead, completed in 2024 - 1 Unit



School Lane, Dunleer, completed in 2024 - 1 Unit

In December 2024 Louth County Council announced the completion of Ireland's first houses constructed using concrete printing technology. The housing project at Grange Close in Dundalk commenced construction in May 2024 and comprised three two-storey, three-bedroom A2 energy-rated homes. They will provide accommodation for families on the social housing list, who will be the first residents in Ireland to live in 3D construction printed (3DCP) homes.



Completed 3D Printed Houses at Grange Close, Dundalk

The houses were built using market-leading COBOD 3D construction printing technology, which automates the concrete laying process. This method offers significant advantages, including reduced construction time and costs, enhanced structural integrity, and more efficient resource use.



3D Concrete Printer in operation at Grange Close, Dundalk

# Housing

In 2024 Louth County Council continued with the construction works on the local authority direct build schemes of Fulacht Fia at Mount Avenue, Dundalk (93 units), Boice Court, Drogheda (72 units) and Muirhevnamór infill sites, Dundalk (11 units). These developments are progressing on site and due to be completed in 2025.



Fulacht Fia, Mount Avenue, Dundalk, 93 units under construction



Boice Court, Mell, Drogheda, 72 units under construction



Muirhevnamór, Dundalk, 11 units under construction

Other Turnkey and Part V housing units were acquired by Louth County Council in developments such as Ballymakenny Green in Drogheda, Bothar Glais, Louth Village, Listoke Willows, Drogheda, Mullagh Close in Clogherhead and Seabrook, Dromiskin. All units acquired in these new developments are A-Rated energy efficient homes.



Ferrard Park, The Twenties, Drogheda – completed 28 Units



Fulacht Fia, Mount Avenue, Dundalk, 93 units under construction Official launch of Ferrard Park, The Twenties, Drogheda

# Housing



Ferrard Park, The Twenties, Drogheda – completed 28 Units



Ferrard Park, The Twenties, Drogheda – completed 28 Units

In December 2024 Louth County Council commenced works associated with four accelerated delivery programme (ADP) social housing projects at Ballymakenny Road, Drogheda; Greenhills, Drogheda; Ravel, Dunleer, and Mullavally, Louth Village. Each project will deliver high quality homes and sustainable communities utilising modern methods of construction (MMC). A further site at the Point Road, Dundalk received planning approval in December 2024 from An Bord Pleanála for 44 social housing units.



CGI image of Dunleer ADP site

Development Name	Location	Number of units
Bakery View	Ballymakenny Road, Drogheda	97
Greenhill's Grange	Greenhills, Drogheda	46
Ravel Drive	Ravel, Dunleer	70
An Mullach	Mullavally, Louth Village	58
Blackwater Meadow	Point Road, Dundalk	44

# Housing

## HOUSING DELIVERY (AFFORDABLE) AFFORDABLE PURCHASE

Louth County Council received departmental approval for an Affordable Purchase Scheme of 10 units at Ballymakenny Park, Drogheda, Co. Louth in quarter 4 of 2024. Advertising and promotion of the scheme commenced in December 2024, with the Application Portal opening on 10th February 2025. Further potential schemes for 2025 are under review.



Affordable Housing Unit - Drogheda

## COST-RENTAL

Comprising 20 cost-rental homes Newtown Wood, Drogheda was completed via a partnership arrangement between RESPOND, Louth County Council, the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage, and The Housing Agency. The funding for Newtown Wood is a combination of the Cost Rental Equity Loan (CREL) funding from the department and private finance through the Housing Finance Agency (HFA). Cost-rental offers secure, affordable housing with rental prices nearly 30% below comparable properties in the area.



Newtown Wood Cost Rental Development in Drogheda

## VACANT PROPERTY REFURBISHMENT GRANT (CROÍ CONAITHE)

The aim of the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant is to increase the number of vacant and derelict properties being brought back into residential use. The grant permits applicants to apply for one property which would become their principal private residence, and one property which would be made available for rental purposes. Applicants may apply for up to €50,000 for works to a vacant property, with an additional top-up of €20,000 if the property is declared derelict.

Up to the end of December 2024, there were 239 applications, with 177 of these being approved for the grant. The grant was paid out on 41 applications.

## HOUSING DELIVERY (APPROVED HOUSING BODIES)

Under the Housing for All Action Plan, Louth County Council in partnership with Approved Housing Bodies delivered 349 Units, comprising 105 houses and a mix of 244 duplex and apartments.

Municipal District	Number of Units
Dundalk	151
Drogheda	198

These homes are funded under the Capital Assistance Leasing Facility (CALF) which allows the Approved Housing Bodies to borrow up to 30% of the total cost of acquisition. These units are then made available to the local authority under a Payment and Availability Agreement for 25 to 30 years.

All units are A-rated energy efficient residential homes.

# Housing



Ecco Road, Dundalk with Clúid



Dublin Road, Dundalk with Respond



Newtown View, Marsh Road, Drogheda with Respond

## HOUSING MAINTENANCE

### Reactive Maintenance

2024 was a particularly busy year for maintenance with a total for 8,734 requests received and 7,047 requests completed. Maintenance repairs are diverse and in 2024 included the replacement of kitchens, roofing, heating and plumbing calls.

In 2024, a boiler service and replacement programme commenced, this included the service of boilers and heat pump systems across the county.

### Stock Condition Surveys and Planned Maintenance

The LGMA in conjunction with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage is developing a new app-based programme for Stock Management and Surveys. The first phase of this was rolled out in quarter 3 2024 in the form of the commencement of stock condition surveys.

In 2024, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, provided funding for planned maintenance projects. This was utilised to fund replacement windows and doors in Boice Court, Drogheda with works being completed in November 2024.



Newtown Wood Cost Rental Development in Drogheda

## HOUSING REGENERATION

### Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme

Louth County Council's 2024 Energy Efficiency Retrofit Program initially provided for energy upgrade works to 140 Council houses. The program is primarily funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, with supplementary funding provided by Louth County Council, in order to assist with the delivery of the program.

# Housing

With the support of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Louth County Council ultimately delivered energy retrofit works to 150 Council houses in 2024. Depending on the exact requirements for each house in the 2024 Program, the energy retrofit works included upgrading heating systems through the installation of air to water heat-pump systems, replacing windows with triple-glazed units & external doors with composite doors, applying external wall insulation or cavity wall insulation as appropriate and providing top-ups to attic insulation.

The energy retrofit works have improved the fabric of the houses and have provided tenants with an increased level of comfort in their homes. The energy retrofit works has also resulted in all houses included in the program now having a B2, or better, energy rating. The 2024 program resulted in a combined post-works energy saving of 530.338 MWH and carbon savings equivalent to 2067.939tCo<sub>2</sub>. In accordance with the departmental criteria for the program, a blend of houses was selected for inclusion, providing a balance between houses that required a full suite of retrofit measures, and those that required a shallower energy retrofit.



John Kirk Park, Clogherhead



John Kirk Park, Clogherhead



John Kirk Park, Clogherhead

## Voids Programme

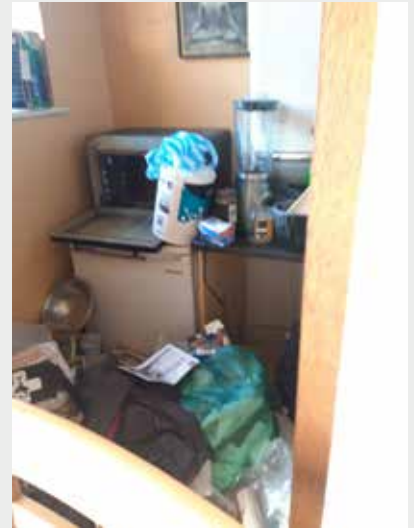
Louth County Council's Voids programme continued in 2024 with 75 units completed with the support of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. In total over 105 units were completed.

Photographs of before and after voids unit in Dundalk

# Housing

## WORKS BEFORE

John Kirk Park, Clogherhead



## WORKS AFTER

John Kirk Park, Clogherhead



## HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

Louth County Council's Homeless Service provides assistance to both single individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in County Louth. In 2024 67 homeless households were allocated a social/voluntary property and 97 households availed of assistance from Homeless Services in accessing private rented accommodation under the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) scheme.

In conjunction with our partners in the NGO sector, Louth County Council continues to provide supported temporary accommodation for homeless individuals and families. 2024 saw a further increase in supported homeless bed capacity with the opening of a facility for the accommodation of up to 18 homeless families in Paradise Place, Drogheda.

At the end of 2024 there were a total of 235 adults availing of emergency accommodation in County Louth. The number of families in emergency accommodation stood at 59, including 81 adults and 132 children.

### Housing First

Louth County Council continues to lead the implementation of the Housing First model in the North East Region (Louth, Monaghan & Cavan) as part of the National Implementation Plan for Housing First.

Peter McVerry Trust have been contracted to provide the service on behalf of the North East Local Authorities since 2020. By year end of 2024, 35 individuals in County Louth were successfully placed in supported tenancies under this model.

# Housing

## Tenant in Situ Scheme

Louth County Council actively works with tenants and landlords in relation to the Tenant in Situ scheme and may purchase properties for applicants who are at risk of becoming homeless. Louth County Council acquired 55 Tenant in Situ properties in 2024.

## Mortgage to Rent Scheme

Under the Mortgage to Rent scheme, a borrower may remain in their home with ownership of the unit moving to the Mortgage to Rent provider. The borrower then becomes a tenant of the local authority or Approved Housing Body. This arrangement is entered into voluntarily and agreed between the borrower, their lender and the Mortgage to Rent provider. After five years have passed, the borrower may be given the option to purchase the home back if they are in a position to do so. In 2024 Louth County Council processed 7 Mortgage to Rent applications.

## Repair and Lease Scheme

This scheme aims to bring vacant properties in need of repair back into use and made available for social housing. An interest-free loan of up to €80,000 per unit is available to property owners to fund the repairs, and in return, the property is made available for social housing for a period of 5 – 25 years.

In 2024, Louth County Council processed 2 repair & lease cases with 2 units now available for leasing.

## Private Rental Inspections

The private rental inspection team continued its work during 2024, enforcing the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019.

In total 1,718 rented dwellings were inspected with the majority of dwellings found not to be compliant with the required standards. A total of 1,299 advisory letters, 22 Improvement Notices and 2 Prohibition Notices were issued in 2024.



Recently acquired property - Dundalk



Recently acquired property – Drogheda

## Estate Management

The Estate Management team continued to engage with tenants of the Council to encourage residents to become involved in the management of their estates. Tenancy agreements were monitored to ensure ongoing compliance with conditions of tenancy.

## Estate Management – Tenant Liaison Officers (TLOs)

The Tenant Liaison Officers provide advice and assistance to promote good estate management in Council owned properties. All new tenants must attend pre-tenancy training and where tenants breach their tenancy agreements, the Tenant Liaison Officers may implement a range of measures proportional to the non-compliance. Support is also provided by the Estate Management team towards the upkeep and maintenance of green spaces and environs in housing developments.

Post-tenancy inspections were held with new tenants and a range of issues addressed. There was ongoing participation with Louth Local Development and Tuath Housing to address the social needs in the Haggardstown area. Coffee mornings took place in 2024 to encourage residents to get to know one another and a walking group was also established.

Number of tenants who attended pre-tenancy training sessions	310
Number of post-tenancy inspections provided for new tenancies	203

# Housing

## Estate Management – Anti-Social Behaviour Officers (ASBOs)

The Anti-Social Behaviour Officers deal with complaints under the Council’s Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy. Warning letters may be issued where tenants breach their agreements. Abandonment Notices were served where tenants had moved out but did not inform the Council

Number of Anti-Social Behaviour Investigations Completed	<b>170</b>
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Estate Management part-funded a fence for the residents association in Beechwood Drive, Dunleer to provide security for mowers etc.



Resident from Greengates Manor, Dundalk who attended the coffee morning in Haggardstown

## Housing for Disabled Persons

The 2024 annual target for social housing allocations to

households with a member who has a disability was 106 accommodation units. The target was exceeded with a total of 169 units allocated.

The provided accommodation consists of 35 single storey properties (6 standard, 10 wheelchair accessible, 19 adapted); 80 apartments (16 standard, 1 wheelchair accessible, 63 adapted); and 54 two-storey houses (47 standard and 7 adapted).

A significant number of applicants were consulted about their specific housing needs arising from disability and housing options were discussed with them. Collaboration meetings with the HSE Disability Services were convened regularly.

The Local Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027 was reviewed and the revised report was published in April 2024.



Special Needs Housing, Annaghvacky, Hackballcross, Dundalk

## HOUSING GRANTS

### Housing Adaptation Grants

The Council receives funding from the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage for adaptations to private homes for disabilities and for older persons. The Council’s contribution is 20% of the approved grant. 327 grants were offered to approved applicants in 2024 to the value of €2,733,815.

Description	Grants Awarded in 2024	Works completed in 2024
Housing Adaptation Grants (HAGS)	116	129
Mobility Aids Grants (MAGS)	26	12
Housing Aid for Older Persons (HOPS)	185	126
<b>Total</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>267</b>

# Housing



A bedroom extension and bathroom adaptation part-funded with a Housing Adaptation Grant in Dundalk



A ramp installed in Dunleer with financial assistance from a HAG.

## Traveller Accommodation

The Traveller Accommodation Programme for 2019–2024 had a total allocation target of 55 social housing units to Traveller households during that period. The programme began in July 2019 and ended on the 31st of December 2024

The target was exceeded with a total of 90 allocations completed to Traveller households from 2019–2024. Of the 90 households, 79 were allocated standard social housing units; 8 were allocated halting site bay relets at Woodland Park Halting Site in Dundalk; and 3 were allocated relets in group housing schemes across the county.

There were 5 caravan/mobile home loans approved to Traveller households from 2019–2024; 10 shower units were installed in the basic service bay units in the halting site; 2 properties were purchased for Traveller households with members who have a disability using Traveller Accommodation funding; 1 first time house purchase grant was approved to the value of €3,810 to a Traveller household who had privately purchased their home; 3 adaptations were completed using Traveller Accommodation funding at council properties for households with a member with a disability; 12 group housing units underwent the energy upgrade works; and 2 new group housing schemes at Clontygora in Dundalk and Derryveigh House, Hoey's Lane Dundalk were designed and approved for planning (due for completion in 2025).

A new Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025–2029 was adopted by the Council in October 2024. The programme report is on the council's website and sets out new targets for social housing allocations to Traveller households for the next 5 years.

# Cultural Services

## LOUTH LIBRARY SERVICE

The trajectory for Louth Library Service throughout 2024 was strategically aligned to the National Public Library Strategy, *The Library is the Place, 2023-2027* and its three main themes of People, Places & Connections.

### Louth Library Service at a Glance

#### Statistics 2024

**KPI's Registered Members, Visits to Library Branches and Items Issued**

**Graphics Library Visits/Issues, Social Media Engagement and Library Programming**

**Social Media** is a key marketing tool to promote and share the wide array of initiatives and events taking place. By end of 2024 Louth Library Service had:

9,164 followers on Facebook

2,472 followers on Instagram @louthlibraryservice

## ESERVICES

The wide range of services includes:

- Borrow Box for eBooks, eAudiobooks, newspapers and magazines
- LOTE4Kids provides access to over 5,000 digital books for children in 75 languages
- Transparent Language provides access to language course with over 110 languages
- Universal Class provides 600 courses such as Business, Finance, Office Skills and Psychology
- Digital Help Hubs were held in Dundalk, Drogheda, and Ardee Libraries in collaboration with the Regional Literacy Coordinator in Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB)

## LIBRARY HIGHLIGHTS

### Former bank building transformed into modern new Dunleer Library

Chief Executive Joan Martin launched the new library in Dunleer on September 11th with the library opening its doors to the public on December 4th. The former Bank of Ireland building on Main Street has been refurbished to include a flexible, open plan, welcoming space with adult and children's reading areas, Wi-Fi and PC access. The new premises facilitates increased community engagement through opportunities for school visits, story time, talks, book clubs, and the many other services offered by Louth Library Service.

The refurbishment of the first floor, which has lift access, will allow groups to meet in one of the two flexible community rooms and will provide more opportunities for library events. Dunleer Library also has a 'Magic Table' in the new facility. The Magic Table promotes social connections for people living with dementia and children and adults with special needs. There are accessible public toilets on the ground and first floors.



Chief Executive Joan Martin, Acting County Librarian Amanda Branigan, Director of Services Ger Murphy, Cathaoirleach Kevin Callan, Cllr John Sheridan and representatives from Mullacurry Construction at the launch of Dunleer Library.



Louth Library Service staff at the launch of Dunleer Library.

# Cultural Services

## Launch of Age Friendly Libraries

Heather Humphreys, Minister for Rural and Community Development, awarded Age Friendly Recognition Charters to Ireland's public libraries at an event at Edgeworthstown Library in Co Longford on 16th February 2024. Minister Humphreys said she was "delighted" to recognise "the superb work of our public libraries in developing enhanced services for ageing communities and to award the Age Friendly Recognition Charters to our library services". Libraries, she added, "are a core service within our neighbourhoods, and they are particularly invaluable to older people as a source of information, and as community hubs, learning centres and cultural facilities." The Age Friendly Recognition Charter recognises the progress made by the public library service in developing enhanced services for older communities.



Minister for Rural and Community Development Heather Humphreys and Acting County Librarian Amanda Branigan

## 30th Anniversary Celebrations

Dundalk Library took a walk down memory lane with a panel talk on 11th April 2024 to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Dundalk Library in Roden Place. It was an evening of laughter, stories and reminiscences of events and characters in the library's history.

Drogheda Library also celebrated 30 years at Stockwell Lane on 17th May 2024 with contributions from local authors Nicola Pierce, Nicola Cassidy, members of the Drogheda Creative Writers group, and staff past and present.



Current Acting County Librarian Amanda Branigan with previous County Librarians, Ann Ward, Yvonne O'Brien and Bernadette Fennell.

## Bloomsday at Áras an tUachtaráin

Louth Library Service attended the Bloomsday Garden Party in Áras an Uachtaráin on Sunday, 16th of June 2024. The importance of libraries and promoting reading was the key theme of the event. Staff were greeted personally by Mrs. Sabina Higgins on arrival, and President Higgins gave a rousing address stressing the importance of libraries in our community, the gift of reading, and the importance of the work library staff do, sometimes in difficult situations.



Louth Library Service staff at the Bloomsday Garden Party

## LAI/CILIP Conference

The LAI (Library Association of Ireland)/CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) held their joint annual conference at The Canal Court Hotel in Newry on 24 April 2024. The theme of the conference was 'Building for the Future'. Louth Library Service was represented by Executive Librarian Leona Burgess, who delivered a plenary presentation with Health Service Executive Librarian Ruth O'Rourke on the 'Baby Talk' Neonatal Intensive Care Reading Project in Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Drogheda.

# Cultural Services

## LIBRARY STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

### Healthy Ireland at Your Library (HIAYL) 2024

This Department of Health-led initiative enables Louth Library Service to provide quality and reliable health information within the community. HIAYL provides a wide range of resources and supports, including a comprehensive collection of HSE-recommended books on health and wellbeing in all branches and online health information such as e-books, e-Audiobooks and online courses.

The Healthy Ireland at Your Library programme 2024 saw several health-related events take place in libraries. These included a monthly Memory Café in Dundalk and Drogheda, which were very well attended. There was a successful visit from the Irish Heart Foundation mobile roadshow, where members of the public attended for healthy heart checks at the library. The Marie Keating Foundation and Alzheimer's Ireland mobile health units also attended our libraries. Various topical talks and workshops took place on Aging Well, Coping with Exam Stress, Dyspraxia, Emotional Well-being and Food and Nutrition

Louth Library Service worked closely with the Healthy Louth Coordinator and Community Section on a number of projects. As part of Community Connect- 5 Ways to Wellbeing programme, library staff attended an event with other Health Care in the Community providers, sharing information and promoting HIAYL and library services. This project was rolled out by Healthy Louth and promoted in libraries throughout the county.

Dundalk & Drogheda libraries supported and promoted the use of activator poles in collaboration with Louth Sports Partnership, which the public borrowed from libraries and returned just like a book! Two six-week-long Activator Poles Walking Groups used the library as meeting points for their activities.

A Family Carers Support group was established in Dundalk library, and we continue to promote our libraries as breastfeeding-friendly spaces. The success of the Living Well Programmes in two of our branch libraries provided a welcoming, inclusive space for people dealing with chronic illness.

Library staff had HIAYL information stands at community events, including the Louth Agricultural Show, Redeemer Resource Centre as part of a coffee morning for Mental Health Ireland, and O'Fiaich College for Adult Learners Wellbeing Day.



'Exercise and Ageing' with Chartered Physiotherapist Paul Bolger in Dundalk Library

### Right to Read

The Right to Read programme supports literacy development for families, adults, and children as part of a locally coordinated, sustainable, and standardised approach across County Louth. Louth Library Service facilitated a programme of literacy supports and initiatives throughout 2024, including:

#### Ireland Reads Campaign

The Healthy Ireland-led national campaign Ireland Reads commenced on the 7th of February, which led up to a national day of reading on February 24th. The campaign celebrated reading and the benefits of reading while promoting resources available in your local library. Local Ireland Reads ambassadors for Louth Library Service included authors Florence Gillan, Susan McGovern, Valinora Troy, and the 2024 KPMG Children's Book Award winner Clara Kumagai for her title 'Catfish Rolling'. Other local ambassadors included Cllr. Michelle Hall, Sinead Brassil of LMFM, Aoibheann McLernon, Wellbeing Officer in Louth County Council Staff, Sinead Nugent of Connect Family Resource Centre, Lara Williams of Louth ABC, and teacher Emma Jane Larkin from Réalt na Mara National School in Dundalk.

To celebrate Ireland Reads Day, manga art workshops were facilitated by John Carpenter in Dundalk and Drogheda Libraries. Ardee Library hosted an event for adults where library visitors were invited to 'make a date' with their next read.

# Cultural Services

- **Spring into Storytime** took place during April, encouraging children, families, and schools to visit the library for story time and literacy events. 20 events were scheduled with 675 participants.
- **Summer Stars Reading Programme** is the national public library reading programme for children running throughout the summer. Louth Library Service had a very successful Summer Stars with 66 events and 1,009 participants.
- **Children's Book Festival** spreads the enjoyment of reading among children and families during the month of October. 35 events took place, with 1,000 attendees. Events included school visits, author visits, and arts and crafts.
- **Family Time at Your Library** in December took place in all libraries to support the involvement of the whole family in children's reading. There were 26 events with 595 participants.
- **Six DEIS Schools Literacy and Numeracy Summer Camps** and 8 Summer Camps took the opportunity to visit their local library for a tour with information on joining and using the service.
- Collaboration continued during 2024 with Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda, on the reading project '**Baby Talk**' for neonatal babies. Louth Library Service continued to support the project, which promotes library services to the youngest children in County Louth while promoting the 'Right to Read' programme and Little Library Book Bag initiative in the hospital. Library staff hosted an event for Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) graduates in Drogheda Library on the 26th of January, and library staff attended an event for graduates to celebrate World Prematurity Day with the staff of the NICU in November. Library staff promoted the benefits of library membership and regular Baby Book Club and Parent and Toddler events in the library and provided an interactive music storytime for attendees.
- Adult literacy services were developed during 2024 through continued collaboration with our Right to Read network partners. Library staff delivered library tours along with Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB), signed up new members, and facilitated book clubs. Sensory equipment was highly in demand, including the Tovertafel table, which is particularly popular with adult groups, and the new Cubbie in Dundalk Library. Louth Library Service attended regular meetings as a stakeholder on the regional literacy coalition, facilitated by the regional literacy coordinator for Louth and Meath.
- **Housebound Service.** 552 individual housebound deliveries were made throughout County Louth during 2024, offering borrowers who are not able to come into the library in person a way of staying connected to their communities and keeping up to date with reading trends and materials.
- **Louth Library Service** continued to collaborate with Meath Library Service on a literacy project in Mosney Village. We provided e-service roadshows throughout the year which allowed residents to become library members while providing information on e-services, library programming, and events, including My Open Library in their local library. We held a storytime event to celebrate Spring into Storytime and provided Little Library book bags to support children graduating from preschool. Summer Star packs were provided to the community library in Mosney. A joint author event in collaboration with Meath Library Service was held to celebrate Children's Book Festival.
- **My Little Library Book Bag** was available free from each library branch in County Louth for every child starting school in September 2024. There was a choice of an Irish book, 'Beag Bideach' or an English title, 'Chu's First Day at School'. The initiative aims to build on the relationships between the early learning and childcare settings and libraries as part of the First 5 Government Strategy for babies and children and the Right to Read Programme.

## Primary School Library Service

Louth Library Service provides a school van service to 75 primary schools throughout the county.

148 schools were visited during 2024; over 4,100 students and teachers visited the school van, with 165 new teacher card accounts created.

- Number of days visiting schools: 98
- 148 Number of schools visited: 148
- New teacher accounts: 165
- Visitors on van: 4,192

Through the van visits, we sought to provide schools with a continued connection to the library. In-person class visits were also available in all five branches, heralding a marked increase in junior members and book issues throughout the county. The school service celebrated Right to Read programmes throughout the year, including Spring into Storytime, Summer Stars, Children's Book

# Cultural Services

Festival and Family Time at Your Library. Literacy Week, World Book Day, Louth Science Festival, and Little Library Book Bag were promoted through the school's van.

## Class Sets, programmes and specialised equipment

96 class sets were issued in 2024, and teachers were invited to visit the bookstore to select class sets in person with the introduction of a class set catalogue available in hard copy and online via the LCC website. TTRS, our touch-typing programme, licenses were available on request via the Schools Library Service. C-Pens were available for teachers to use with students to aid with reading. Dyslexia-friendly and neurodiversity resources were promoted to teachers.

## Secondary Schools Service

Library staff provided workshops to support secondary school students with history projects while recommending resources to students and teachers for school project work and research. The reference library provides access to original source material and online resources, covering



A borrower collecting his Little Library Book Bag



A borrower collecting his winning Summer Stars prize in Dundalk Library

a wide range of historical material about County Louth. Transition Year students attended workshops on dealing with anxiety and coping with exam stress.

## Early Learning Centres (ELC)

This year we continued to actively engage with ELCs in the area. As part of the Right to Read programme, we distributed Little Library Book Bags to ELCs while promoting the benefits of library membership from a young age and offering recommendations and supports for ELC book collections.

# Cultural Services

## LIBRARY FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### Library Capital Funding Announcement

The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys, announced a major investment of over €25 million towards our public library service on 24 April 2024. Among the funded projects is €3 million toward a new library on the site of the old Dominican Church in Drogheda. Louth County Council was also successful in securing funding toward a new mobile library vehicle.

### Dormant Accounts Funding (DAF)

The Department of Rural & Community Development's Dormant Accounts Funding Scheme assists public libraries in supporting people with disabilities and other marginalised groups. Louth Library Service submitted a successful funding proposal to purchase the following:

- Assistive technology, including a further 20 C-Pen Readers to support those with literacy problems and visual impairment
- Armchairs to allow for a more comfortable reading experience for older customers and those with mobility issues while visiting the library
- Height-adjustable desks, ergonomic chairs, and a large monitor to enhance accessibility to public PCs.

The purchases under this funding have built on previous initiatives and enhanced the commitment of Louth Library Service to improve our spaces and to support adults and children with reading difficulties, visual impairments, and mobility issues. The continued development of our physical spaces and services has contributed to and strengthened our commitment to ensuring that Louth libraries continue to be welcoming and inclusive spaces for all members of our communities, a key objective of the new library strategy 'The Library is the Place'.

### Varcities – Green Cities are Healthier Cities EU funded Horizon 2020 project.

Dundalk Library was delighted to announce the addition of a new sensory pod, 'The Cubbie,' which was purchased as part of the Varcities – Green Cities are Healthier Cities EU-funded Horizon 2020 project. The project was launched on 24th June 2024 in the Courtyard area of Dundalk Library. The Cubbie is an immersive, multi-sensory space that helps regulate sensory stress, reduce anxiety, and encourage participation. The booth has a suite of images, sounds, and lighting that can be programmed to suit the sensory profile of each individual.

## CREATIVE IRELAND

### 'The Boyne and Beyond' Community Art Project

'The Boyne and Beyond' Red Door Art Project is a collaborative project funded by Creative Ireland through Louth County Council's Arts Office and facilitated by Louth Library Service.

Artist Alison O'Grady worked with participants from the Red Door Project to create a fabulous series of wall pieces that are now displayed in Drogheda Library. The Boyne & Beyond project began with a series of dynamic group discussions and brainstorming sessions, where the participants explored the significance of the River Boyne, both historically and personally.

As the project evolved, the group decided to create six thematic boards, each representing a different aspect of the Boyne's influence — from its mythology and ancient history to its modern-day environment and social connections. The Boyne and Beyond wall pieces will be permanently on display in Drogheda library.



The Cubbie in Dundalk Library

# Cultural Services



## Louth Science Festival 2024

The seventh annual Louth Science Festival took place from 10th to 17th November 2024 and 2,013 people attended events.

Funded and supported by Creative Ireland through Louth County Council Arts Office and Research Ireland, Louth Science Festival sought to make science more fun and accessible to the entire community.

To make the festival as accessible as possible and maximise audiences, this year we hosted two free science fairs in Dundalk Library and Drogheda Civic Offices on the 10th and 17th of November, respectively.

The fairs featured demonstrations, workshops, and talks for all ages. This year we hosted talks with:

- Anna Geary: Radio & TV Broadcaster, All Ireland Winning Camogie Captain, Performance Coach and Author
- Karl Henry: Fitness Expert, Radio & TV Broadcaster, Author, and Podcast Host
- Nuala Moore: extreme swimmer, ice swimmer, marathon swimmer, coach, author of 'Insight into The World of Ice Swimming' and 'Limitless'
- Dr. Niamh Shaw: engineer, scientist, writer and performer recently voted one of Ireland's leading science communicators and STEAM specialists
- Sonairte a talk with Ella from the interactive visitor centre promoting ecological awareness and sustainable living

Also featured were workshops by Circus 250, Dr. Barry Fitzgerald, The Rediscovery Centre, Anyone4Science, Go Fly Your Kite, Origami, and Yoga.

The festival's 2024 offering saw a continuation of Louth Library Service's collaboration with Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT), iCrag, The Irish Air Corps, and Met Éireann, as well as our local primary and secondary schools.

## Louth County Council Commemorative Programme 2024

Funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media, Louth Library Service programmed a free autumn lecture series by leading authors, historians, and broadcasters, which was facilitated by Pegasus Media & Consulting Ltd. Topics included 'The



Circus 250 workshop in Dundalk Library for Louth Science Festival

'Last Land War' by Dr. Myles Dungan, 'The Big House and the Irish Civil War' by John Dorney, 'Reaching for the stars – de Valera and America' by Dr. David McCullagh and 'The Irish Diaspora' by Turtle Bunbury.



Dr. David McCullagh in Dundalk Library as part of the commemorative programme lecture series

# Cultural Services

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Louth Library Service celebrated Sustainable Development Goals Week (SDG) in September. The National Implementation Plan for the SDGs (2022-2024) acknowledges libraries as key stakeholders, recognising their role as sustainable institutions helping to provide knowledge, understanding, and resources to communities through initiatives, facilitation, and citizen involvement. Louth Library Service held a children's art competition in collaboration with Louth County Council Climate Action Team with the theme, "What should climate action look like in County Louth? which reflected SDG goal 13: Climate Action.

## OTHER GENERAL EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- **Brigid 1500** 'Louth Birthplace of Brigid' Festival got underway in January, with creative events for children and adults taking place in Ardee, Drogheda, and Dundalk Libraries. A fantastic Brídóg workshop took place with Shauna Swords where participants designed and crafted to celebrate Brigid 1500.
- **International Women's Day** — artist Susan Farrelly facilitated a mixed media art workshop for adults in Dundalk on the 5th of March and Drogheda Library on the 12th of March.
- **Seachtain na Gaeilge** 1st–17th March. Chun Seachtain na Gaeilge a cheiliúradh, bhaineamar úsáid as ár gcuid Gaeilge le taispeántais agus eachtraí. To celebrate Seachtain na Gaeilge, we used our Irish through displays and events. Dundalk, Drogheda, and Ardee Libraries hosted interactive bilingual Irish Centenary History talks for schools with author Carmel Kelly. A bilingual storytelling session with Roisin Murphy for students was held.
- **Pride 2024** was celebrated with storytime and an art and craft session where children created colourful kindness clouds and took home an activity pack.
- **Bealtaine Festival** — This Age and Opportunity Festival is Ireland's national celebration of the arts and creativity as we age. Louth Library Service had a packed schedule of events throughout May, including a drawing workshop with facilitator Christine McCourt and a pigment and ink workshop with artist Grainne Murphy. Drogheda Library hosted a workshop on 'Tracing your Irish Family History'.
- **Heritage Week, 17th-25th August 2024** — Drogheda Library compiled a video from Monasterboice, one of Louth's finest heritage sites, which attracts tourists from across the world to experience the Round Tower and High Cross. The video was streamed on the library Facebook page to celebrate Heritage Week.

- **Culture Night, 20th September** — Ardee Library celebrated Culture Night music from Ardee concert band Intermezzo Ensemble and local ukelele band Uke n' Rollers. Dundalk Library hosted an evening of 'Crafts and Ceoil' with Scoraíocht Lann Léire providing traditional Irish music.



Artist Susan Farrelly facilitated a mixed media art workshop #inspireinclusion to celebrate International Women's Day



Participants at the Brídóg workshop with artist Shauna Swords in Dundalk Library

## Louth Arts Service

The Arts Service for County Louth delivered a wide range of actions in 2024 supporting the development of arts and cultural services as outlined in our Arts Development Plan 2022-2026 and our Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023-2027.

## Development & Community

The Arts Service continues to support a wide range of programmes and artist residency programmes in Creative Spark, An Táin Arts Centre and Droichead Arts Centre. In addition, direct programming by the Arts Service, consulting with strategic partners culminated in activities including the following:

# Cultural Services

## Music & Entertainment in Healthcare Settings:

Our Bealtaine programme in May saw visits to six healthcare settings around the county featuring musicians including Liam Merriman, Grainne Hope & Lisa McGuinness. Through our Creative Ireland programme, we also supported music therapy sessions in the Birches Day Care setting for patients with Alzheimer's.

## Film & Theatre support:

Through our arts programming we supported the development and production of 3 films, all shot on location in Louth and all with Louth based filmmakers producing or directing. Many tech staff and actors involved in the films also live in or are based in Louth. We supported a new play, 'Why Are You Here?' by local writer Radhika Iyer which premiered in An Táin in September. The interactive play centered around an immigrant Indian woman's relationship with her mother and saw the actors prepare and serve the audiences with an Indian meal. We also supported Quintessence production of 'The Bród, The Bold and The Beautiful,' a pride themed play centered around 3 people, each born in a different decade, and each navigating the issues of prejudice and identity living as an LGBTQ person.



Musician Liam Merriman performing at St. Joseph's Nursing Home as part of the Bealtaine programme. Photo credit: Dave Keegan

## GRANTS & AWARDS

In 2024, the Arts Service continued to make available a range of bursaries and awards to individuals and organisations in Louth, including: Grants under the Arts Act & School Musical Instrument Purchase Scheme. A total of 38 grants & bursaries were awarded during 2024.

In addition to the grant scheme, we supported festivals including Drogheda Arts Festival, Drogheda Traditional Music Weekend, Drogheda Classical Music Series, Louth

Contemporary Music Society, Boyne Festival, Sean Corcoran Series, Show Your Roots Festival, Harp Festival, Louth Film Festival and Féile na Tána. We also provided support to World Africa Day, and several other projects including the printing of a poetry book & purchasing Dyslexia Friendly books for Deis Schools.



A young audience member gets a taste of the virtual reality in one of the exhibitions as part of Drogheda Arts Festival 2024. Photo credit: Jenny Callanan

## Information & Advice

The [www.createlouth.ie](http://www.createlouth.ie) website is the hub for funding, events, opportunities, projects, and resources for the Arts in Louth. We continue to provide information and support to local artists on what resources are available to them and what support we can provide throughout the year. Information and advice are provided through the arts office by email on [arts@louthcoco.ie](mailto:arts@louthcoco.ie)

The Arts Office has also signed up to support the Safe to Create programme, ensuring relevant training is provided and supported by all who work in the industry to make it a safe space to work. For more information on the Safe to Create programme see [here](#). The Arts Council of Ireland continues to provide a range of information and funding packages to artists. For more details on the funding streams and the work they do please see [here](#).

## ARTISTIC PROGRAMMING

### Youth Events:

The arts office continues to support arts delivery to the youth of the county. Through our grants we supported after school drama clubs, Drama summer schools and sensory workshops in schools with additional needs. We supported Dundalk Youth Centre with a music mentoring programme for members providing skills in performing songwriting and vocal work.

# Cultural Services

## Culture Night 2024:

Culture Night took place on 20th September and 2024 saw us hosting our largest programme to date. Over 29 events took place across 19 venues in Louth, and we had everything from print-making workshops to live music, art exhibitions and opera in cafés! Highlights included a wonderful concert, 'Poems, Bells and Synths,' in The Augustinian Church, produced by Michael Holohan. Artist Shauna Swords conducted an evening of creativity in the Outcomers building in Dundalk. Ardee library had live music with the Ardee Town Band Intermezzo Ensemble, while Dundalk library had crafts and creativity with Scoraíocht Lann Leire providing the background music entertainment. We had live music, visual art workshops and storytelling at An Tain, Droichead Arts Centre held one of their late night 'Night Moves' events with opera performances in 3 cafes and restaurants in Drogheda. Boyne Tradfest launched their festival on Culture Night with performances in the Tholsel and had live music in McHugh's. Highlanes Gallery had family workshops, food tasting and live music and Mo Chara in Dundalk was host to pop artist AE MAK. Over 2,000 people attended the events in Louth, and over 80 artists facilitated the events on the night.



Highlanes Gallery Family workshop on Culture night

## Louth County Council Commemorative Programme 2024

2024 saw the arts office commission a series of 8 postcards commemorating key events that occurred during the period 1912-1921. Events such as the shelling of Millmount

tower and the prison break in Dundalk were captured by illustrator Alan Dunne with local historian Donal Hall providing the information to support the image. The sets will be available to get from local libraries in the spring of 2025 when a specially framed set will be launched. For more information on the postcards and to see digital versions of them please see [here](#)

In addition to the postcards, 'Sorcha, Queen of the Castle' was developed as part of our 2023 Decade of Centenary project. The story evolved around protagonist Sorcha and her time as a maid in Bellingham Castle during these troubled years. Due to popular demand, we expanded the project, and funding was provided for the printing of a large number of books to allocate 10 copies to every primary school in the county. The success of and reception to the book has been phenomenal and we are now developing a school package for writing and illustration to tie into the book from 2025 onwards.



Writer Nicola Cassidy signing copies of 'Sorcha, Queen of the Castle' at a workshop in the library for 5th class from St. Malachys Girls School.

For more information on the Arts Office and the Arts Development Plan see [here](#).

## CREATIVE IRELAND

In 2024 the Creative Ireland Culture Team delivered on range of projects, both in house initiatives and community grant projects.

**The Creative Ireland Community Grant** fund supported 13 groups in researching, planning, and delivering projects. Supports provided included sensory workshops, summer school programmes, music mentoring programmes and outreach workshops.

# Cultural Services

**Cruinniú na nÓg**, the national day of youthful creativity in June, took place on Saturday 15th June. We ran a series of workshops across Louth in the weeks leading up to Cruinniú day including Rap and Music Songwriting workshops facilitated by Rhyme Island with the New Leaf group in Ardee. On the day itself we had a range of activities at Markey Square in Dundalk with spray painting workshops, escape rooms, puppet shows and large-scale canvas painting. There were workshops in An Tain Arts Centre's, a family fun day in Sonairte in East Meath facilitated by Droichead Arts Centre and everything from visual art workshops in Pebble Lane Studios to Baking and Cookery lessons in Dromiskin. Over 650 young people took part across all the events and our open events at Market Square and Sonairte had an attendance of over 1400 combined.



Spray painting workshops at Market Square as part of our annual Cruinniú na nÓg day in 2024. Photo credit: Eamon Gosling

**Large Scale Projects** - large scale projects with significant impact or legacy were also funded. These included a community outreach project run by Droichead Arts Centre with local schools and the SEEK festival and its new mural and walking tour events.

**In House Projects** – Our Culture Team were also busy developing projects in house. Age Friendly worked with An Tain Arts Centre on a fantastic positive ageing programme. Our Public Realm team commissioned a new art piece in the newly built Termonfeckin Playground. Artist Breda Marron collaborated with the primary school children beside the playground designing a new piece for installation in the playground. Meanwhile Drogheda Library partnered with Artists Alison O'Grady and the Red Door project in Drogheda creating a beautiful piece of art work for display in the library, while the Estates of Mind project in Dundalk, led by the Community Engagement Officer, Melissa, worked with residents in one of the

socially disadvantaged estates in Dundalk on a short film/documentary piece about growing up in the area and the diverse cultures living there.

### Other highlights included:

Brigid 1500 Art exhibition – following on from the 2023 funded Artist in the Community project, match funded by Louth County Council, the arts office held an exhibition for 10 days during the Brigid:1500 Louth Birthplace of Brigid Festival. Taking over the old Houstons Building in Dundalk the exhibition featured all the work created throughout the 2023 workshops leading up to the 1500 celebrations. There were over 6,000 visitors to the exhibition space across the 10 days, it was a tremendous success and a fantastic showcase of the breadth of artistic work conducted through the project.



The 3D wooden Brigid Cross Sculptures that were part of the Brigid1500 Artist in the Community exhibition during the 2024 commemorative festival. Photo credit: Sean McMahan

# Cultural Services

## Creative Climate Action Fund

Louth County Council delivered on the Louth Urban Food Sanctuary Project throughout 2024 holding over 19 in person events including training and mentoring on seed saving and produce selection, food tasting events, community events and farm tours. The project culminated in the 'Louth Feast' event in DKIT in November when local food producers attended a network and show case event in the Hospitality Suite, while students from the culinary school delivered food tasting on recipes they devised featuring some of the produce grown as a result of the project. The Creative Climate project has one final event in early 2025 when we will be launching the recipe & information booklet which additional funding was received for. The booklet will contain tips and information around food sustainability as well as a range of recipes from both the students at DKIT and local cultural groups such as the Ukrainian and African communities.



The Louth Feast event in DKIT highlighting local food producers as part of the Louth Urban Food Sanctuary project. Photo credit: Ryan Duffy

## Creative Health and Wellbeing Shared Island Fund

In partnership with the Healthy Ireland Co-Ordinator funding was received under the Shared Island Strand of the Creative Health and Wellbeing Fund. The project saw Dundalk Youth Centre and the Magnet Centre in Newry partner on an 18-month long project providing upskilling workshops and creative initiatives to members of both groups. Several events and workshops have been held to date and the project will run throughout 2025 until its completion. This initiative is a step to creating more cross border relationships, particularly with our young people, building a better, more cohesive future for all.

## Creative Ireland 2023-2027

For further information on the Creative Ireland programme and to view the 5-year Culture and Creativity Strategy please [click here](#).



# 4



# Strategic Economic Development

The Strategic Economic Development Directorate provides for the co-ordinated economic development of the county by planning for, initiating and managing projects that contribute positively to its ongoing development.

The Directorate has three key areas of responsibility:

- Economic Development, including the Local Enterprise Office, tourism services and work involving partners and funding outside the state, including European Affairs and the EU PEACE Programme.
- Fire and Emergency Services, including the Fire Service, Civil Defence and Building Control, providing vital and lifesaving services to the public.

- Planning, the way in which we organise the built environment in our county. Planning, conservation works, heritage and the implementation of strategies which help to keep our citizens safe.

The Directorate is involved in the marketing and promotion of the council as a business-friendly location and engages in strategic economic planning, which informs Louth County Council's policy decisions.



# Planning Section

## Planning stats for 2024:

<b>Total number of planning applications</b>	<b>1,060</b>	of which 830 applications were received via the e-portal
<b>Pre-planning total</b>	<b>363</b>	(increase of 14% from 2023)
<b>Section 5 referrals</b>	<b>83 applications</b>	(increase of 51% from 2023)
<b>Housing units commenced 2024 in County</b>	<b>2,775</b>	(representing 150% increase on 2023)

Commencements of housing units in 2024 represents 4.6% of housing commencements nationally.

## Online planning

The online e-planning system went live in December 2022. During 2024, 78% of all planning applications received were via the online portal compared to 53% in 2023.

Customers who wish to lodge a planning application or make a submission to a particular application can use the e-planning portal and upload documents via this platform <https://planning.localgov.ie/en/local-government-ireland-planning-system>

A once off registration on the portal is required for all users.

## Forward Planning

### Variation 2 of the County Development Plan 2021-2027

Following the publication of the 'Sustainable Residential and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities' by the DHLGH in January 2024, a Variation to the Development Plan was proposed to update the Plan to take account of the standards and policy requirements of these Guidelines. Nine submissions were received in response to the Variation.

The Variation was adopted at the Council Meeting on the 20th May 2024.

### Pre-Draft Issues Paper Drogheda Joint Local Area Plan

As part of the preparation of the Joint Local Area Plan for Drogheda a Pre-Draft Issues Paper was published. The purpose of the Issues Paper is to encourage public participation and engagement in the plan making process and give people an opportunity to set out their thoughts on issues they feel are important to the future growth of the town. This includes issues such as housing, economic

growth, transport, the environment, and the provision of social and community facilities. 153 submissions were received in response to the Issues Paper.

### Draft Dundalk Local Area Plan

The Draft Dundalk Local Area Plan 2025-2031 was placed on public display in July 2024. This Plan provides detailed planning guidance and policy objectives, at a local level, in relation to the development strategy for Dundalk. It focuses on a range of themes and issues, such as, population and economic growth, delivery of housing and community facilities, regeneration of vacant and under-utilised lands, the potential impacts of climate change, environmental protection, and investment in transportation and water services infrastructure.

154 submissions were received in response to the Draft Plan. The Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Plan were placed on public display in December 2024. It is anticipated that the Local Area Plan will be adopted in March 2025.

## PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

### Planning – Enforcement

The Planning indicators are given below in relation to Enforcement complaints regarding unauthorised developments for the year January – December 2024.

Description	Enforcement in relation to unauthorised development
Number of Planning Enforcement Complaints investigated	256
Number of Planning Enforcement cases received which did not require follow up	Nil
Number of cases closed/resolved through negotiation	Nil
Number of Warning letters issued	237
Number of Enforcement Notices issued	16
Number of cases referred for legal proceedings	3
Number of Injunctions	Nil
Number of Prosecutions	Nil

# Planning Section

The Planning indicators listed below are in relation to Notices Issued under the Derelict Sites Act, 1990 for the period January – December 2024.

Description	Enforcement in relation to Derelict Sites
Number of Derelict Sites files opened	45
Number of Section 11 Notices – Directing Owner to carry out work	2
Number of Section 8 Notices – Intention to Enter on Derelict Sites Register	55
Number of Section 8 Notices – (Entry on Derelict Sites Register)	29
Number of cases referred for legal proceedings	Nil
Number of sites removed from the Derelict Sites Register	5
Number of Derelict Sites Levies raised	Nil
Number of Prosecutions	Nil
Number of Files closed	36

## Planning – Enforcement – Dangerous Buildings

The Planning indicators listed below are in relation to Notices Issued under the Local Government (Sanitary Services) Act, 1964 for the period January - December 2024.

Description	Enforcement in relation to Dangerous Structures
Number of Dangerous Structures Files opened	50
Number of Section 3 (1)(a) Notices – Directing Owner to carry out work	63
Number of Section 3(2)(b) Notices – Louth County Council carry out works	Nil
Number of Section 2 Notices – Dangerous Place	Nil
Number of Dangerous Structures Entered on the DS Register	52

Number of cases referred for legal proceedings	7
Number of Prosecutions	Nil
Number of Dangerous Structures Removed from the Derelict Sites Register	20
Number of cases closed	29

## Residential Zoned Land Tax

The Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) is a new tax that seeks to activate zoned and serviced land for residential purposes. It was introduced by the Department of Finance and the Revenue Commissioners in conjunction with the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage under Section 80 of the Finance Act 2021.

The role of the Planning Authority is to prepare maps that will show the residential and mixed use land the tax will relate to (i.e zoned and serviced land), including where relevant the date that the land satisfied the criteria for inclusion in the tax. These maps take the form of a Draft and Final Map identifying land which is considered to be in scope for the tax measure.

The Louth County Council Final Residential Zoned Land Tax Map for 2025 was published on the 31st of January 2025 following a public consultation period during 2024. The Annual Draft Map for 2026 was published on the 1st of February 2025. The Residential Zoned Land Tax will be charged annually from the 1st of February 2025 onward. The tax will be administered by the Revenue Commissioner and landowners will be required to register for the tax. Homeowner who pay the Local Property Tax will not be liable for the RZLT even though their property appears on the map.

There will be a further opportunity to submit rezoning requests in respect of the Final Map 2025. Submissions can also be made in respect of the Annual Draft Map 2026 seeking the inclusion or exclusion of lands on the map. The final Annual Map for 2026 will be published on the 31st of January 2026.

## Short Term Lets

Regulations governing the short-term letting in rental pressure zones was introduced in 2019. New legislation was due to apply from September 2022, however this has been delayed. In 2024 Louth County Council had one new enforcement case under investigation in respect of short term let accommodation.

# Planning Section

- No notification letters were issued during 2024 informing properties of their legislative responsibilities in this regard.
- Four planning applications were received in 2024 relating to short term let/holiday accommodation. Three permissions were granted for six no short term let units in total. Two of these were temporary permissions. One permission for short term let accommodation was refused.
- One warning letter was issued in respect of an alleged unauthorised short term let use, this case remains open.

## Taking in Charge

The Planning Section continued to work on resolving the remaining unfinished housing developments in the County in collaboration with Uisce Eireann and other sections of the Council. There were six estates taken in charge in 2024.

- Dundoogan
- Coulterplace
- Sandymount Drive
- Church Park
- Dowdall Crescent
- Harbour Grove

There are currently approximately 70 estates in County Louth under review, approximately one third of these estates are actively progressing through the varying stages of the Taking in Charge process.

## Built Heritage Investment Scheme and Historic Structures Fund 2024

Louth County Council received 29 applications under the Built Heritage Investment Scheme, with a further 12 applications under the Historic Structures Fund in 2024.

Funding of €140,404.00 was shared between sixteen applicants under the Built Heritage Investment Scheme. This comprised of, St Peter's Church (conservation on 18th Century Snetzler organ), Collon Church (restoration on stained glass), Shanlis House, Ardee (reroof house), 57 Clanbrassil Street (reinforce/ reconstruct brick pediment), 58 Clanbrassil Street (reinforce/ reconstruct brick pediment), Brooklyn, Brook Street, Ardee (refurbishment of sash windows), Jocelyn House (reconstruction of two chimneys), Redemptonist, St. Alphonsus Road (refurbishment/ repair to stained glass windows), Kildemock, Ardee (refurbishment/ repair on sash windows), Wyanstown, Togher (refurbishment of sash windows), Blackhall House (repair chimney stack), Wyanstown House, Togher (repair of sash windows) Townley Hall, Slane Road, Drogheda (repair of the oak double doors), Whitestown, Greenore (full rethatch), Newrath, Castlebellingham (full rethatch) and Cannontown, Thatch (full rethatch).

Funding of €134,662.40 was drawn down under the Historic Structures Fund 2024, covering four projects, under the 2024 scheme, at Edenaquinn, Dundalk and Oriel Centre. Two further, two-year projects (commenced in 2024), Widows House, Castlebellingham and Derryhale Hotel.



# Economic Development

The Economic Development Unit supports the co-ordinated economic development of County Louth by planning for, initiating and managing projects that contribute positively to the County's ongoing economic development. The unit is involved in the marketing and promotion of the County as a business-friendly location and engages in strategic economic planning which informs Louth County Council's policy decisions. This work is important to ensure that the maximum benefit is derived from economic and employment development decisions associated with major infrastructure.

## Louth Economic Forum (LEF)

The forum, established in 2009, comprises the business sector of County Louth, Local Authority Management and all of the State Agencies that interact with those generating economic activity in the county and is a one stop shop for potential investors. The award winning forum continues to build partnerships and fosters a culture of joined-up thinking to proactively facilitate further economic development and job creation in Louth, focusing on key areas including Tourism & Heritage, Foreign Direct Investment, Indigenous Industry and Education & Training. The forum is chaired by Mr. Gerry Murphy.

With the move in direction on some funding opportunities to a more regional basis, the Forum continued to incorporate a regional focus on meetings with presentations being given by regional representatives, thus ensuring stakeholders in County Louth are aware of the opportunities which are available at an early stage. In early 2024, this included presentations by Ronan Whitty, Manager of the Mill Enterprise Hub, Drogheda, and Deirdre MacDermott, Vice Chair of Ardee Business Park in relation to their respective plans for the future. In May, a presentation on the skills research project being conducted on the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor was provided by Dr. Eoin Magennis, Principal Economist with the University of Ulster's Economic Policy Centre. This was followed by a discussion and Q&A session. In July, there was a presentation from the Council's Tourism Officer Sabhbh Ní Mhaolagáin, on Louth's current tourism proposition and the aims and goals for a new tourism strategy – also followed by a discussion and Q&A session.

A presentation was given in September by Fionnuala Rogers, Drogheda Digital Innovation Manager in relation to the continued progress on the Drogheda Digital Innovation Hub (DDIH). And in November, the forum meeting was hosted by Creative Spark, Dundalk. A tour was given of their Fabrication Laboratory. The Enterprise FabLab at Creative Spark has the aim to stimulate enterprise, creativity, innovation and education in the North-East region.

## Economic Development & Enterprise Support Strategic Policy Committee (SPC)

Strategic Policy Committees advise and assist Louth County Council in it's work and are tasked with the formulation and development of policy for approval by Council.

The Economic Development & Enterprise Support SPC met in January 2024 where the draft Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2023 – 2029 was approved to go before the full Council. In May, the SPC were given a presentation from the Programme Manager of the Drogheda Digital Innovation Hub on their work to date and future plans.

Following the local elections held in June 2024, Louth County Council established new Strategic Policy Committees in line with the revised Guidelines published by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The new members of the Economic Development & Enterprise Support SPC, chaired by Councillor Pío Smith, held their first meeting in December 2024 and agreed a schedule of meetings and work programme for 2025.

## Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP)

The LECP sets out the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of Louth, both by the Council directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders. The Economic Development and Enterprise Support Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) together with the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) are responsible for oversight of the implementation of the Louth LECP 2024 – 2029 which they jointly launched in May 2024.

A monitoring group for the LECP will be established in 2025, at that stage each of the lead partners assigned to the actions in the LECP will be contacted to obtain their plan to complete their respective action.

## Shopfront Improvement Grant Scheme

The Shopfront Improvement Grant Scheme which forms part of Louth County Council's suite of business incentives was available to all local retailers and business owners in the County. In 2024, 36 applications were received under the scheme.

## Drogheda Business Improvement District Scheme (BIDS) Drogheda (2025 – 2029)

A proposal was received in April 2024 from Drogheda BIDS Company (Love Drogheda) to extend the term of the Business Improvement District Scheme for a further period of five years from January 2025. One submission was received following a period on public display.

# Economic Development

A ratepayer plebiscite was held with the following results: number of votes in favour of the proposal for a continuation of the Drogheda BID Scheme, 425, and number of votes against the proposal for a continuation of the Drogheda BID Scheme, 38.

The proposal was approved by the members at the October Council Meeting with the extension of the Scheme coming into force from 1st January 2025.

## Age Friendly Business Recognition Programme

Two Age Friendly Business Workshops took place in Dundalk and Drogheda in April 2024. The workshops were delivered by Orlaith Carmody, Business Advisor to Age Friendly Ireland. Further Workshops were delivered by the Economic Development Section in September and October 2024.

Participants from a total of 16 different businesses took part in the 2024 Workshops. 6 businesses completed the remainder of the programme and were awarded the Age Friendly Charter in 2024.



Participants in the Dundalk Age Friendly Business Workshop



Participants in the Drogheda Age Friendly Business Workshop

## Night-Time Economy Adviser Pilot

Drogheda was one of nine locations selected for the national Night-Time Economy Adviser pilot funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Media and Sport. Over 2024, the new Adviser has focused on establishing a framework for collaboration, developing a clear action plan, and trialling initiatives to support a more vibrant and inclusive night-time economy.

A key step was formalising the existing Purple Flag group as Drogheda's Night-Time Economy working group. The Purple Flag is an international accreditation recognising excellence in the management of the evening and night-time economy, and Drogheda successfully retained its status in 2024. Following two partner workshops, a Night-Time Economy Action Plan was developed, setting out 16 actions under three strategic objectives:

1. **Diversifying and Strengthening the Night-Time Offering** – Expanding cultural, social, and hospitality options to encourage greater participation and economic growth.
2. **Improving Safety and Accessibility** – Enhancing public transport, public realm lighting, and data-driven safety initiatives to ensure a welcoming night-time environment.
3. **Fostering Collaboration and Knowledge-Sharing** – Strengthening engagement across businesses, cultural organisations, and public services to support a sustainable and innovative night-time economy.

In line with these objectives, a range of trial initiatives has been delivered to test new approaches to night-time activation. Night Moves, curated by Droichead Arts Centre, has demonstrated early success in bringing alternative spaces such as cafés into night-time use, pointing towards



Drogheda Purple Flag Award

# Economic Development

potential new directions for the town's evening economy. The launch of the Drogheda Comedy Festival, selling over two thousand tickets, has also contributed to increased late-night footfall and new event opportunities.

Other initiatives have focused on improving the night-time experience, including the promotion of late-night transport options, discussions with the HSE regarding ambulance data to support safety planning, and securing access to footfall counters for data-driven decision-making. Further innovation within the Lú Festival has also helped diversify Drogheda's night-time cultural offering. These efforts mark a strong first year, laying the groundwork for a thriving, inclusive, and dynamic night-time economy in Drogheda.



Drogheda Comedy Festival

## Brigid 1500: Louth Birthplace of Brigid

The Brigid 1500: Louth Birthplace of Brigid Festival took place from 26th January to 5th February 2024. There was a full programme of events over the 10 days, from an Art Exhibition, live theatre performance and many associated events.



Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Paula Butterly, launching the Brigid 1500 festival

11 events received funding under the 'Arts & Creativity Community Grant'. These were a mix of festivals and community events and included financial contributions towards Brigid of Faughart Festival, Candlelit Procession at Faughart, community art, 'Biddies Day' at Ardee Bog, 'Biddies Day' in Drogheda, a St. Brigid / Brigid the Goddess poetry writing workshop and a creative nature sewing project called 'Creating the Brigid Weave'.



Aerial photo of the completed Brigid's Cloak from the Cooley Connect Well 'Creating the Brigid Weave' project

23 applications were received under the 'Brigid 1500 Retail Window Decoration Scheme'. The focus was to encourage commercial premises in Co. Louth to decorate their windows to join in the Brigid 1500 celebrations. There was great variety in the window decorations.

As part of the Brigid 1500 Festival, a Brigid's trail map was developed incorporating the local points of interest

# Economic Development

associated with Brigid. The map is available in all Tourist Offices in County Louth and is also available to download from the Visit Louth website.



Brigid's Trail Map and Guide

## Urban Animation - Lú Festival of Light, Drogheda

The Lú Festival of Light took place from 25th October to 3rd November 2024. The Spooks parade launched the festival. The 2024 festival incorporated several new initiatives including the Lú Festival of Light Window Decoration Scheme, an Oíche Lán Gaeilge where all of the shows were delivered through the Irish Language and a new interactive installation at Scotch Hall during the day that allowed participants become part of the Milky Way.

There was national coverage in the run up to the festival in the Sunday Times magazine and the Sunday Independent Life Magazine. The Tourism Section took part in a number of radio interviews to raise awareness of the festival. The festival was also promoted on the 9pm RTE news on Saturday, 26th October 2024.

In tandem with the Window Decoration Scheme, the Night-Time Economy Adviser for Drogheda commissioned 50 bespoke Lú Shield Lanterns, developed in collaboration with local artists and led by artist Vivian Byrne, who also contributed to the Spooks Parade. These LED lanterns, shaped to reflect Lú's distinctive shield, added an innovative layer to the festival's visual identity, seamlessly integrating with shopfront displays and festival elements.



Lú Lanterns on display



Crafty Traders at the Lú Festival

The 2024 Festival and Night-Time Economy Adviser for Drogheda also trialled the inclusion of the local craft trader group, Crafty Traders, in a dedicated food and craft market located in the Abbey Car Park (adjacent to Dominic's Street). Four traders participated, representing grassroots cottage industries, with all reporting better-

# Economic Development

than-expected outcomes, including excellent sales and an increased public profile. Some traders created bespoke items inspired by the festival's themes and Drogheda, such as artwork and candles, which were particularly well received.

The content of the Lú Festival installation in the Drogheda Tourist Office (The Tholsel) has been updated with the 2024 shows. This legacy installation shows highlights of the festival to date and is available to view during the Tourist Office opening hours.

The Lú Festival was the winner of a prestigious global award in June 2024 when it received the Best Arts and Culture Award at the Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM) Awards ceremony held in Glasgow. The festival triumphed over tough competition and was recognised for its innovative use of storytelling, community, light shows, and the iconic historic architecture of Drogheda.



Presentation of Best Arts and Culture Award (Lú Festival)

Lú Festival of Light's key source of funding was the Fáilte Ireland Urban Animation Scheme 2022 - 2024 and this funding scheme has now come to an end. It has been agreed that the Lú Festival of Light will be led by Drogheda BIDS in 2025 with the support of Louth County Council.

## Festival Funding

Louth County Council received 24 applications under the 2024 Festival Grant Initiative which was open to local and community events to benefit the local economy and tourism in the County. 21 applications received funding.

10 applications were received under the Regional Festivals and Participative Events Programme 2024. 8 applications received funding.

Louth County Council also provided funding for the following in 2024:

- Sponsorship of the Northern Lights 2024
- Sponsorship of the Dundalk, Drogheda and Ardee St Patrick's Day Parades
- Sponsorship of the Cross Border Tourism Conference 2024
- Sponsorship of the Drogheda Sail Training Bursary
- Sponsorship of the Drogheda Comedy Festival
- Sponsorship of the Boyne Midsummer Festival
- Sponsorship of the Thomas D'Arcy McGee Summer School 2024
- Sponsorship of the Omeath Halloween Fireworks Display
- Contribution to the Dundalk Shop Local Gift Voucher Scheme
- Sponsorship of Irish Legends Tour 2024 – Seapoint Golf Links
- Sponsorship of an Award at the 2024 North East Business Awards
- Sponsorship of the County Louth Schools Volunteering Conference
- Contribution to Drogheda Lú Festival of Light 2024
- Sponsorship of the Ulster Dance Championships 2024
- Contributions towards Ardee, Dundalk & Drogheda Christmas Lights 2024

Visit Louth had a promotional stand at the Louth Age Friendly Expo where the Tourism Officer spoke to those in attendance in relation to all there is on offer in County Louth.

# Tourism

## Tourism Officer

Sabhbh Ní Mhaolagáin commenced her role as Louth Tourism Officer in January 2024.

## County Louth Tourism Strategy

Runda Hospitality and Tourism Solutions have been appointed to work with the Tourism Officer on the new Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2025 – 2030 for County Louth. Consultation with members and stakeholders will commence in early 2025.

## Visit Louth

Work is underway on the new Visit Louth website; the new website will be a fresh design with an accessible and more user-friendly experience. The Visit Louth website aims to attract visitors with an engaging 'What's On'. The new website will be launched in early 2025. The new site will also make it easier to see our various brands, Drogheda.ie and sealouth.ie.

Curio PR have been appointed to assist us with our promotion of the county through all media channels.

Following a request for quotes, we are now in the process of redeveloping our Visit Louth logo. A survey was carried out with various stakeholders in October 2024. Work is progressing with the appointed designers. The new logo will be ready for launch alongside the new website in early 2025.

## Marketing and Promotion

Visit Louth and sea louth had a very successful weekend at the Holiday World Show, Dublin in January 2024. The stand was available to tourism providers and trade within County Louth giving them an opportunity to promote



Visit Louth / sea louth stand at the Holiday World Show 2024

their businesses and attract visitors to the county. A competition to win a hamper containing a selection of County Louth produce together with a mid-week stay in the Ghan House, Carlingford attracted 535 entries, many of which agreed to be added to the Visit Louth and sea louth mailing lists.

A delegation from Louth County Council travelled to New York to meet representatives from Tourism Ireland and IDA Ireland and took part in the New York St. Patrick's Day Parade. They also attended a series of events where County Louth was promoted.



Louth County Council Delegation meeting Tourism Ireland

As part of the 'Reimagined Boyne Valley Destination', Fáilte Ireland engaged a digital specialist to review the Council tourism websites in conjunction with the Tourism Section. This took place over an 18-month period. A meeting was held in March 2024 to review the findings and to discuss what options the future of digital platforms might hold for the destination. These will feed into the forthcoming Tourism Strategy being led by the Tourism Officer.

The Annual Cross-Border Tourism Conference, hosted by Dundalk Chamber of Commerce, took place in April. Louth County Council were a key sponsor of the Conference and also had a stand at the event promoting Visit Louth and sea louth. Sabhbh Ní Mhaolagáin, Tourism Officer, was among the speakers.

# Tourism



Sabhbh Ní Mhaolagáin, Tourism Officer, speaking at the Cross-Border Tourism Conference

Louth County Council were delighted to be a sponsor of the Irish Legends Tour which took place in June 2024 at Seapoint Golf links. Some well-known celebrities from the worlds of sport and entertainment descended on County Louth to play in the celebrity pro-am. Visit Louth and sea louth had a stand at the tournament to welcome players and visitors and provide them with information on all there is to see and do in County Louth.



Staff from the Tourism Office meeting some of the celebrities at Seapoint

Colette Moss, Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development & Tourism was a speaker at the LGMA National Tourism Conference which took place in Kildare in April. The presentation was on the successful 'Brigid 1500: Louth Birthplace of Brigid' festival.



Colette Moss, Senior Executive Officer, speaking at the LGMA National Tourism Conference

Filming for an all-Ireland TV series 'Ireland from Above' was completed in 2024. The show will feature six counties in Ireland and County Louth will have a full episode. The show will feature Louth's history and scenery using drone footage and will be broadcast in the USA on PBS. It will be aired in Spring 2025.

# Tourism



## 'sea louth' Scenic Seafood Trail

The tourism section continued to actively promote this tourism initiative throughout 2024 with a number of blogs published and an ongoing social media campaign on X, Facebook & Instagram. The trail showcases Louth's picturesque coastline and locally sourced seafood and aims to drive footfall into our restaurants and eateries which serve good quality seafood dishes, and to also enhance the visitor experience while in County Louth thus increasing dwell time.

Three new sea louth stamp collection points were added to the trail in 2024 – Omeath Post Office, 'On Yer Bike', Carlingford and Morgan's Fine Fish, Omeath. The Brasserie Restaurant in the Fairways Hotel also signed up as a participating restaurant on the trail.

Two sea louth workshops were held in the Glyde Inn, Annagassan in May 2024. The first workshop was for restaurateurs and producers, the second was for front of house staff. The workshops were facilitated by Julie O'Brien from Runda Tourism & Hospitality Solutions. There were over thirty participants in attendance.



Participants at the sea louth workshops

Following on from the workshops, a new ambassador pin was created for the participants as they are our representatives promoting the trail and encouraging our visitors to explore the coast and the delicious seafood offering available. Two new restaurants also signed up following the workshops – Coast & Co. in Greenore and Nelly's in Drogheda.

A new momento, a sea louth beanie hat, was unveiled in 2024 and is available in all Tourist Offices in County Louth, when you present a completed sea louth passport.



sea louth Beanie Hat

sea louth engaged with Boyne Valley Flavours as part of their new 5 year 'Strategy for Food in the Boyne Valley' which is at consultation stage.

# Capital Projects and Plans

## Destination Towns Capital Investment Programme

The launch of the Drogheda Visitor Wayfinding & Orientation Project took place on 29th April 2024 in Highlanes Gallery, Drogheda.

The Wayfinding totems, engraved paving stones and bronze stud inlays are installed across Drogheda and display historical information and maps of easily accessed locations within walking distance.



Launch of the Drogheda Visitor Wayfinding & Orientation Project

## Ancient Destination Experience Development Plan (ADEDP)

Louth County Council continued to work closely with Fáilte on the development of a number of placemaking plans and trails

### Cooley Placemaking needs analysis

Following on from the Carlingford Destination Orientation Development plan work commenced on the placemaking needs analysis which focuses on Omeath, Carlingford and Greenore.

### Drogheda Boyne Gateway Visitor Placemaking study

Louth County Council are currently working with the Paul Hogarth company who have been engaged by Fáilte Ireland to carry out a placemaking study of Drogheda.

### Táin Trail

Fáilte Ireland has engaged the Paul Hogarth Company to review the current Táin Trail route and to recommend opportunities to reimagine it into an internationally compelling experiential route that engages local communities and visitors. They are working with the local authorities in the Táin Trail region on same. A final draft copy of the report has been agreed and will be available in early 2025.

### Reimagined Boyne Valley Drive

Fáilte Ireland has engaged the Paul Hogarth Company to review the current Boyne Valley Drive Cluster Orientation route and to provide recommendations on opportunities to reimagine it into an internationally compelling experiential route that engages local communities and visitors. They are working with the local authorities in the region on same. Work is progressing on various signage types and locations.

### Shared Island Development

Funding was received under the Shared Island Funding and a consultant was appointed to conduct a Feasibility Study to develop the greater Carlingford Lough region incorporating the Cooley Peninsula and Mourne / Gullion Area. The report is complete and was submitted to the Department of the Taoiseach.



# Boyne Valley Tourism

## Boyne Valley Tourism Strategy

The Boyne Valley Tourism Strategy was launched on Friday, 4th October in Emerald Park. The strategy calls out several key initiatives for Louth, including a master plan for Millmount Museum and a conservation plan for Ardee Castle.



Launch of Boyne Valley Tourism Strategy in Emerald Park

## Members

22 new members joined in 2024 including The Marcy Hotel, Coffee Box Drogheda and Seapoint Golf Links.

## Virtual Press Event

In February, the Boyne Valley Tourism Officer made a presentation to journalists including the Daily Mail, Irish Country Magazine, the Novel Traveller, Travel Extra, Travel Photographer, Munster Express and a freelance Journalist. 5 members joined the presentation who had new stories to tell including Emerald Park, Newbarn Farm and the Donkey Shed, Boyne Valley Trails, Drogheda Comedy Festival and Boyne Boats.

## Press Visits

There were a number of National and UK Press Visits in 2024 which resulted in articles published in the Sunday Independent, Munster Express, Meath Chronicle, Irish Daily Star, Travel Extra, Irish Daily Star, Foodepedia and the Travel Magazine; with publications upcoming in 2025 including the Senior Times, the Irish Examiner, Inews, Sainsburys Magazine and Travel Weekly.co.uk.

## Online Content

Online Content includes 18 Boyne Valley Itineraries, 100 video reels per year, 100 blogs per year, and monthly consumer and trade ezines. Google display ads, Facebook and Instagram ad campaigns continued throughout 2024.

## Promotion

Discover Boyne Valley promotional materials were distributed at Dublin Airport, to member businesses, Tourist Offices and at Conferences. Promotional Shows attended during 2024 included the Holiday World Show, Balmoral Show and the Bloom Festival.



# Louth/Meath Food Development Strategy

## Boyne Valley Flavours (BVF)

Boyne Valley Flavours held a showcase of craft food and drinks to 45 top London Chefs who visited Carlingford Oyster Factory in January 2024.



Boyne Valley Flavours stand at the Carlingford Oyster Factory

The first Boyne Valley Flavours Steering Committee meeting took place on 23rd January and the Boyne Valley Flavours AGM took place on 27th February at Bellinter House, Co Meath.

A Boyne Valley Bites spring local dining workshop took place in February in Nelly's, Drogheda. The objective is to encourage Drogheda businesses to put a dish featuring Boyne Valley ingredients on their menus. Local chefs Tara Walker & Conor Halpenny demonstrated five dishes featuring Boyne Valley ingredients, along with a suggested drinks pairing, to food-service businesses in the town.



Conor Halpenny & Tara Walker, Boyne Valley Bites

A number of Drogheda eateries participated in the Spring Boyne Valley Bites initiative, serving a special dish made with local ingredients during the Drogheda Comedy Festival and St. Patrick's Festival weekends.

A further Boyne Valley Bites workshop for local chefs and foodservice business owners took place in Nelly's, Drogheda in June. The aim was to educate and inspire foodservice businesses to list local food and drink on their menu for the Drogheda Midsummer Festival.

The updated 2024 Discover Boyne Valley Flavours brochure was printed and distributed to Tourist Offices in County Louth and Meath. Window stickers were distributed to all BVF members.

Boyne Valley Flavours developed a Business Supports Directory which will be a one stop shop for funding and business supports for the members.

As part of the commitment to continue the delivery of an annual local food masterclass workshop for chefs across the Boyne Valley focused on available local produce, two workshops took place in September 2024, one online and one in Lismullin Cookery School, Navan.

# Louth/Meath Food Development Strategy



## Boyne Valley Food Strategy

The Boyne Valley Food Development Strategy 2024 - 2028 was launched on 18th June 2024 in Slane Castle by the Local Authorities of Louth and Meath and Fáilte Ireland. The new strategy brings together three pillars: the Discover Boyne Valley Flavours food and craft drinks network, Food in Tourism, and The Boyne Valley Centre of Food Culture. It sets out the priorities for the region for the next five years, with an overall vision for the Boyne Valley to be recognised for its collaborative approach to developing food as a sustainable economic sector and a food destination where our producers are at the heart of our food culture.



Launch of The Boyne Valley Food Development Strategy 2024 - 2028



Participants at Lismullin Cookery School event

## Events

Boyne Valley Flavours attended the Blas na hÉireann awards in Dingle from the 3rd to 6th October.

Blas na hÉireann, now in its 17th year, is the largest competition for quality Irish produce, celebrating the best in Irish food and drink. There were 9 finalists from County Louth with 4 being members of Boyne Valley Flavours. The Louth Local Enterprise Office sponsored the Best in Louth winners. They also sponsored a Boyne Valley Flavours table in the "Eat the Island" area of the Blas village, showcasing Boyne Valley Flavours finalists where producers were offered a table to sample or sell their products over the weekend.

McCloskeys Bakery were awarded Best in Louth, taking home 8 awards. Other Louth winners included Carlingford Oyster Company, Mac Namees Tea, Nature's Best, Hilton Foods and Dundalk Bay Brewing.

The Samhain Festival of Food & Culture took place in Kells from 7th – 10th November. There was a dedicated Boyne Valley Flavours tent at the festival with twenty

# Louth/Meath Food Development Strategy

one producers exhibiting from across Co. Louth and Co. Meath. There was also a Boyne Valley Flavours stand. Feedback from the producers was very positive. There were over 5,000 visitors to the festival over the weekend. 60% of attendees visited for the first time. Media coverage included The Hotel and Restaurant Times, Irish Examiner, LMFM, Farmers Journal, The Meath Chronicle, Drogheda Independent and Sunday Business Post Magazine, providing great publicity for the region.

## Boyne Valley Centre of Food Culture

The Transition Year Young Cooks Regional Final took place on Wednesday 24th April. The Boyne Valley region was represented by teams from Sacred Heart, Drogheda and Mercy, Navan. Ella Ryan, Development Manager of the Boyne Valley Centre of Food Culture, visited and advised both schools in advance of the final. Sacred Heart School in Drogheda took second place on the day.

Social media channels for The Centre of Food Culture were launched in May 2024 on LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and X. A new website is also live at [www.foodcultureireland.ie](http://www.foodcultureireland.ie). The website allows for event and workshop bookings with upcoming events also advertised.

The Development Manager of the Centre of Food Culture attended a Careers Fair at the University of Gastronomic Sciences in Italy on 23rd and 24th May to interview students for potential internships in the Boyne Valley. They presented four placement opportunities: two at the

Centre of Food Culture and two with businesses in the network. Following the trip, a student from the University completed a very successful placement at Muchgrange Farm, Greenore, working with them on their gelato production and in developing new recipes.

Staff from The Centre of Food Culture joined Bord lascaigh Mhara at an open day in Carlingford with their Aquaculture Remote Classroom (ARC), where Carlingford Oyster Company sampled oysters and participants could take a tour of the ARC and travel around Ireland's Aquaculture farms with virtual reality. The ARC travels all around Ireland, visiting primary schools and sharing all that aquaculture has to offer. The ARC is completely funded through the EU and so is free for primary schools.

The first of the 'Centre of Food Culture, Boyne Valley Farm Walks Series' events was held on Saturday 20th July at Killua Castle Farm with twenty-four participants in attendance. The educational farm walk highlighted some of the projects and practices ongoing at Killua Castle including regenerative farming and a rewilding project and gave participants the opportunity to ask questions and learn more. Participants were made up of the farming community and those interested in learning more about these farming practices.

Following the success of this event, the following further events were held: 1. Celebrating National Heritage Week: Connecting with Martry Mill on Tuesday 20th August and 2. Agroforestry Farm Walk at Rock Farm Slane on Sunday 1st September.

The Centre of Food Culture held its first masterclass focused on hospitality, where chefs, restaurant managers and front of house joined the event to learn about Irish farmhouse cheeses and how to use them as part of a cheese course offering.



Ella Ryan, Development Manager, Centre of Food Culture and Chef Tara Walker at UNISG Careers Fair in Italy

# Heritage Office

## Community Monuments Fund projects

The biggest ticket items run by the Heritage Office this year were the four Community Monument Fund annual projects completed in 2024. CMF is an annual funding scheme run by the National Monuments Service and administered by the Local Authorities. Two of these projects involved the continuation of works that could not be completed in 2023, due to difficulties in trying to contract bat ecologists. The two continuing 'CMF23' projects were conservation of Glaspistol towerhouse, near Clogherhead and Taaffe's castle in Carlingford. CMF24 funded conservation works to Bellew's Castle in Castletown, Dundalk (previously funded with architectural conservation grants). The Heritage Office commissioned and oversaw the conservation of the last remaining part of the town gate of Ardee at Cappocksgate, which came in under budget.

## World Heritage

Louth County Council commissioned consultants to assess the potential for Monasterboice, formerly on the UNESCO Tentative list, to achieve World Heritage status. Having determined that this was very unlikely to happen, the consultants also provided potential alternative routes to international recognition of Monasterboice. The Heritage Officer continued to be involved with wider World Heritage issues, particularly in relation to the Brú na Bóinne WH property and attended a WH training event in UCD.

## Heritage Week 2024

The Heritage Council chose County Louth's Beaulieu House as the national launch venue for Heritage Week 2024, with guests transported from Dublin to Drogheda (and back) by a steam-hauled train. Heritage Week 2024 turned out to be the biggest and best Heritage Week ever, both in Louth and nationally. Very successful events also took place, later in the season, to mark Irish Walled Towns Day in Louth's two Irish Walled Towns Network member towns, Carlingford and Drogheda, where the Drogheda Walled Towns Collective was formed in 2024. All these events were coordinated and some part-funded by the Heritage Council.

## Other external engagement

Louth's Heritage Officer represented the Heritage Officer Network on the national Vernacular Built Heritage Working Group, spoke at the annual Cross-Border Tourism Conference and took part in a Biodiversity Week event.

Locally the Heritage Officer continued as a member of the steering group of the Louth Urban Food Sanctuary, a project designed to build resilience and autonomy in local food growing, including growing 'new' crops made possible by accelerating Climate Change.

## Support and liaison within Louth County Council

The Heritage Office obtained Ministerial Consent for proposed works to two Council-owned sites (Darver graveyard and Millmount), and supported the development of the Dundalk Local Area Plan, Active Travel and Flood Relief Schemes, and advised on Development Management (planning). A new cross-border walking route was created with ORIS funding. The Heritage Officer also advises the committee that approves proposed names for new housing developments.

An unusual but very welcome occurrence in 2024 was the visit to County Louth by the Irish Quaternary Association and the UK Quaternary Research Association. The Heritage Officer wrote some words for their excellent guidebook and helped lead the tour of the Wee County.

# The Local Enterprise Office

## THE LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE (LEO LOUTH)

The Local Enterprise Office is a First Stop Shop for anyone seeking information and support on starting or growing a business in County Louth. LEO Louth promotes entrepreneurship, fosters start-ups, and develops existing micro and small businesses to drive job creation, and provide a wide range of accessible high quality supports for businesses and start-ups. Funding for LEO Louth is provided by Enterprise Ireland and is included in the 2024 Budget.

LEO Louth provides local business with information advice, training, mentoring, seminars and selective financial supports. It engages with over 2000 local businesses annually and has a portfolio of 217 clients which the LEO has provided direct grant assistance to in recent years. In turn these businesses increased their employment levels by a gross figure of 136 and net figure of 25 jobs in the past year.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORTS

During 2024, LEO Louth continued to provide financial supports to businesses included Trading Online Vouchers, Microfinance Ireland's Loan products and mainstream Grant Aid to manufacturing and internationally tradable service businesses with potential to export.

- 23 loan applications were advanced to Microfinance Ireland.
- 20 grant applications were approved: Feasibility Study (6), Priming (8), Business Expansion (2) and Technical Assistance Export Grants (4) were approved with a total approved value of €426,125.50.

## EXPERT ADVICE & GUIDANCE

### Business Training

The training schedule for 2024 continued virtually.

- LEO Louth hosted a total of 52 business training and development programmes with 1068 participants.
- 4 Trading Online Workshops were delivered to 98 participants.
- LEO Louth hosted 9 Start Your Own Business programmes which were delivered to 145 people looking to establish a new business.

### Business Mentoring

In total, 716 mentor assignments were completed during the year, whereby small business owners were matched with a business expert on a one-to-one basis. This was against an annual target of 390.

This was made up of:

- 402 General Business Advice Clinics
- 73 Financial Business Clinics
- 241 1-to-1 Mentoring

## Food Sector Supports

LEO continued to support food businesses under the joint Louth-Meath Food Strategy through its work with the Boyne Valley Flavours initiative.

Boyne Valley Flavours ran two online trainings last year. Content Creation for Tiktok and Beyond (3 Louth businesses participated), and How To Plan A Month of Social Media Content (3 Louth businesses participated).

In June the Boyne Valley Food Development Strategy 2024-2029 was launched at Slane Castle. The strategy is underpinned by a detailed programme of work.

The Boyne Valley Flavours business network finished the year with 104 members. Of these, 38 were Louth businesses.

## Food Starter Programme

4 Louth businesses took part in the Regional Food Starter Programme in 2024. designed to help those with a food idea, or those at a very early stage of starting up a food business. Typically, within the first 24 months.

## Food Academy

Food Academy is a food business development programme where the participants receive training in food safety, market research and branding, marketing, finance, sustainability, and business development. The aim of Food Academy is to provide small food businesses with a solid foundation to progress confidently onto retail shelves.

Successful applicants for the Supervalu Food Academy Programme were informed in 2024 and Muchgrange Farm were accepted onto the programme with their gelato.

## SUPPORTING RETAIL

### Look for Local /Shop Local Campaign

LEO continued to promote #ShopLocal #LookforLocal throughout 2024, and launched a shop local Christmas Campaign, 'Look For Local - Look For Louth' which generated extensive coverage in local press, radio and social media in the weeks leading to Christmas. The very popular LEO Christmas video from last year featuring business owners and images of the major shopping areas was again very well received in 2024.

As part of the 2024 Christmas Campaign LEO pushed for

# The Local Enterprise Office

new businesses to join Louth's online shopping directory which now has a wide range of local businesses and their eCommerce websites listed. This is available at: [www.louthcoco.ie/ShopLouth](http://www.louthcoco.ie/ShopLouth) or at: [www.localenterprise.ie/Louth/Enterprise-Development/Shop-Local-Look-for-Louth/](http://www.localenterprise.ie/Louth/Enterprise-Development/Shop-Local-Look-for-Louth/)

## PRODUCTIVITY & COMPETITIVENESS SUPPORTS

### GREEN for Business

In 2024, 31 applications were approved under the Green for Business Programme.

This support offers business access to an environmental consultant to complete an audit on their business to

help them developing a 'greener' policy which will offer many benefits to business, including:

- Increased cost savings
- Improved resource efficiency (for example: using less energy, water, and materials)
- Reduced environmental footprint and greenhouse gas emissions
- Opportunities for higher and additional value on products and services
- Increased access to customers, improved corporate image and reputation.
- Increased resilience to climate change impacts

### LEAN for Business

In 2024, 10 applications were approved under the Lean for Business Programme.

Lean For Business is designed to encourage clients to adopt Lean business principles in their organisations to increase performance and competitiveness. Lean is for all companies, regardless of sector – it is not just for manufacturing companies.

Lean tools and techniques helping companies across to address competitiveness issues within their businesses by building the capability of their people to identify problems, improve operations and create a more innovative organisation. In a nutshell, Lean is about doing things quicker, better and saving costs. Lean strives to remove waste and to continually improve a company.

Companies who have successfully engaged in LEAN business programmes recorded significant gains, including:

- Productivity increases 20%.
- Sales increases 40%

- Delivery adherence improvements 43%
- Product & Service quality improvements 30%

### Digital for Business

In 2024, 3 applications were approved under the Digital for Business Programme.

Digital for Business is a initiative from the Local Enterprise Office designed to give Local Enterprise Office funded clients that digital edge - from optimising processes to delivering a seamless digital customer experience, the aim is to help businesses prepare and implement a plan for the adoption of digital tools and techniques across the business.

### Trading Online Voucher Scheme

In 2024, 39 Trading Online Vouchers were approved with a total value of €82,288.24.

The Trading Online Voucher Scheme is designed to assist small businesses with up to 10 employees to trade more online, boost sales and reach new markets. Participating in this scheme can make the process of trading online much easier for businesses. This Scheme closed on 31st December 2024.

## MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

**Innovate Accelerate Europe:** LEO Louth partnered with LEO Meath and Newry Mourne & Down District Council in an online International Trade Readiness Programme in 2024 which focussed on supporting small food and drink business. Three businesses from Louth participated in the programme which culminated in a market research visit to SIAL trade show in Paris.

### Certificate in Leadership Management and Business for the Early Years Sector

LEO Louth partnered with LEO Monaghan and Cavan to run this management development programme. This programme offered participants an opportunity to gain advanced knowledge, practices and skills in ethical, democratic leadership and effective management to support sustainable developments in their work settings and across the early years' sector. 22 students successfully completed the programme in June 2024, 7 of these were Louth clients.

**Thrive:** This Programme is designed to support women bringing new products and services to the market in the STEM sector. It also supports women in management in other sectors, or work returners, to pivot their existing skills and experience to enter management and leadership positions in STEM industries. LEO Louth had 11 clients in this programme in 2024.

# The Local Enterprise Office

## Fáilte Ireland/Louth Meath Local Enterprise Craft Tourism Digital Marketing Program

This programme was a pilot programme run by Louth and Meath LEO in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland. A series of workshops and mentoring sessions were delivered to Craft Design Makers in County Louth and Meath to help them develop a saleable Craft Tourism Experience which would help them diversify their product offering and would enhance the general offering for the region. 5 businesses from Louth participated.

### Showcase

In the period 2023-2024 LEO Louth and Meath ran a pilot programme of enhanced training to prepare businesses for Showcase. This programme was developed based on feedback from Enterprise Ireland and buyers at the previous show that clients in the LEO area had to be better prepared. A series of online workshops and 1-1 mentoring were held on a diverse range of topics both pre and post Showcase. The offering was open to those in the LEO Showcase Hall and also to LEO clients exhibiting in the other areas of the show. There were 5 participants from Louth. This pilot scheme was adopted on a national level by the LEO Showcase Committee for 2024-2025.

### Blas na hÉireann 4th October 2024

The Blas na hÉireann awards are the all-island food awards that recognise the very best Irish food and drink products, and the passionate people behind them. Products from every county in Ireland were entered into the 2024 competition to win Gold, Silver or Bronze Blas na hÉireann awards in over 150 food and drink categories. The awards are supported by LEO. The winners from Co Louth were Hilton Foods, Carlingford Oyster Company Ltd, Nature's Best, McCloskey's Bakery, MacNamee's Tea, Dundalk Bay Brewery and Coole Farm, with McCloskey's Bakery awarded Best in County. Boyne Valley Flavours exhibited in the Eat the Island area of the awards to sample and showcase the shortlisted and winning products from the region.

## EVENTS & PROGRAMMES

### Elaine McCormack, Centre of Excellence, Enterprise Ireland Visit to Louth LEO – 12th June 2024

On June 12th Elaine McCormack from the Centre of Excellence in Enterprise Ireland responsible for the Local Enterprise Offices visited the office in Louth and a couple of LEO clients. Elaine, Pamela Kerr, Nimah Dennehy and Sarah Mallon visited Bronagh Conlon of Listoke Distillery in Tinure and saw the production area and gin school.



# The Local Enterprise Office

David Kierans and the team from Zoma who are the Regional National Enterprise Award winners in 2024 welcomed Elaine and the LEO staff to their new premises in Dundalk where they have state of the art facilities.



## German-Irish Interparliamentary visit to Louth – Wednesday 19th June

On Wednesday, 19th June, LEO Louth had the honour of welcoming the German Irish Parliamentary Friendship Group to the Town Hall, Dundalk. This esteemed delegation was keen to understand the implications of Brexit on our community, specifically focusing on Dundalk and the border region.

The visit featured insightful presentations and discussions on a range of critical topics. Representing the Dundalk Chamber, Paddy Malone delivered a comprehensive overview of the challenges and opportunities that have emerged in the wake of Brexit. His presentation highlighted the profound impact on local businesses and the community, drawing parallels with the historical experiences of the Troubles and the subsequent peace and prosperity brought about by the Good Friday Agreement.

Additionally, Thomas McEvoy, Director of Services, emphasised the importance of cross-border cooperation. His remarks underscored the resilient and robust ties we maintain with our Northern Ireland neighbours.

The members of the German Irish Parliamentary Friendship Group were highly engaged and appreciative of the detailed insights provided.

In attendance were Robert Henneberg (Cultural Attaché and Head of Press & Communications at the German Embassy Dublin), Roisin Sheridan, Assistant (Political, Cultural & Press), Bundestag Member - Albrecht Glaser, Stephan Pilsinger, Ariane Fäscher and Linda Heitmann together with Pamela Kerr and Niamh Dennehy from LEO Louth.



# The Local Enterprise Office

## Minister Emer Higgins Visit to Louth – Thursday 27th June

On Thursday, 27th June, Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail, Emer Higgins, made her first official visit to the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Louth. The visit highlighted the dynamic entrepreneurial spirit and innovation flourishing within the county.

Upon arrival, Minister Higgins was warmly greeted by Cathaoirleach Kevin Callan and Leas Cathaoirleach John Reilly, along with Acting Director of Services for Strategic Economic Development, Colette Moss, and LEO Business Advisor, Niamh Dennehy. The Minister also met with other council officials, local Chamber representatives and members of the LEO team, who provided insights into the local business landscape.

During the visit, several LEO client companies had the opportunity to showcase their businesses and speak with the Minister about the LEO supports which they had availed of and how these supports had helped their businesses.



At the conclusion of her visit, Minister Higgins praised the LEO's efforts and the entrepreneurial talent in Louth, stating:

"The hard work of the LEO office here in Louth is evident in every business I have met today. It is fantastic to see that the strategy of my department and the LEO Network has helped create an environment in which these businesses can thrive."

## Brazilian Ambassador Visit to Dundalk

On Tuesday 17th September, the Counsellor to the Brazilian Embassy, George de Oliveira Marques, visited the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Louth, marking an opportunity to strengthen ties between Brazil and local

businesses in County Louth. The visit focused on exploring potential trade partnerships, investment opportunities, and collaborative initiatives that could benefit both Brazilian and Irish enterprises.



(L-R) Hannah McDonnell, Hannah McDonnell Marketing, George Marques, Counsellor of Brazil Embassy and Niall Gallagher LEO Louth

## Visit to Dundalk By Estonian Ambassador Kairi Kunka

On Thursday 19th September Dundalk Chamber and LEO Louth hosted the Estonian Ambassador Kairi Kunka in the Town Hall. The visit was an opportunity to discuss trade links. These visits have been a huge success in helping local companies to create links with foreign companies.



(L-R) Niamh Dennehy, LEO Louth, Estonian Ambassador Kairi Kunka and Hannah McDonnell

# The Local Enterprise Office

## Malta Embassy Visit to Dundalk – Wednesday 30th October 2024

On Wednesday 30th October Dundalk Chamber and LEO Louth hosted the Maltese Ambassador Buttigieg. Local businesses had the opportunity to meet with the Ambassador and discuss opportunities for exploring the Maltese market.



(L-R) Dundalk Chamber President Pat McCormick, Ambassador Buttigieg, Cllr Kevin Callan and Grainne McKeown from LEO Louth

## Visit by Slovenian Embassy Attache Tina Lampelj – Tuesday 10th December 2024

Slovenian Embassy Attache Tina Lampelj visited Dundalk on Tuesday 10th December and were met by Councillor Kevin Callan and Sarah Mallon of the LEO Office. She also met with local businesses to discuss trade links. These visits have been a huge success in helping local companies to create links with foreign companies



(L-R) Sarah Mallon, Tina Lampelj, Hannah Haana Laatio McDonnell, Dundalk Chamber and Cllr Kevin Callan

## Lithuanian Embassy Visit to Dundalk – Tuesday 26th November 2024

Ambassador Jonas Grinevicius and Renata Rinkauskiene visited Dundalk on Tuesday 26th November and were met by Councillor Kevin Callan and members of the LEO Office. They also met with local businesses to discuss trade links. These visits have been a huge success in helping local companies to create links with foreign companies



(L-R) Niall Gallagher, LEO Louth, Renata Rinkauskiene, Minister Counsellor, Cllr Kevin Callan, Cathaoirleach of LCC, Haana Laatio McDonnell, Dundalk Chamber, Lithuanian Ambassador Jonas Grinevicius, and Paddy Malone, Dundalk Chamber

## National Women's Enterprise Day

Local Enterprise Office Louth held a joint event with Local Enterprise Office Meath on Thursday 17th October at the Monasterboice Inn to celebrate National Women's Enterprise Day.

Over 100 female entrepreneurs attended the event, listening to a fantastic panel of speakers and learning from their experiences in starting and growing a business.



(L-R) - Nicola Mitchell, LEO Meath, Panelist Elizabeth Oakes, Niall Gallagher LEO Louth, Panelist Geraldine Johnston, Cllr Kevin Callan, Keynote Speaker Caroline O'Neill and Panelist Emma Duffy and Aoife Fegan, LEO Meath

# The Local Enterprise Office

## Student Enterprise Programme

Students from 2nd level schools in Co Louth took part in the Student Enterprise Programme for the 2023-2024 academic year. On Tuesday 27th February 2024 three county Louth schools were chosen by a judging panel to go forward to represent Co. Louth in the national finals in Mullingar on 9th May 2024.

### County Senior Winner – Colour Mo Cheantar



### County Intermediate Winner – MK Keyrings



### County Junior Winner – Lego Warriors



## County My Entrepreneurial Journey Winner



## Local Enterprise Week 2023 4th – 8th March 2024.

Local Enterprise Week ran from March 4th-8th across all 31 Local Enterprise Offices and Louth had a packed programme with [ 8 local events and a number of regional events with Meath, Cavan and Monaghan as well as national online seminars available to all.

We held eight in person events, some in collaboration with our key stakeholders like Drogheda Chamber of Commerce, Network Louth and Dundalk/Newry Chamber of Commerce with whom we delivered the Cross Border Economy Conference which was attended by Minister Neale Richmond, Minister for Finance Conor Murphy and the American Ambassador to Ireland. The events were well attended and covered a diverse range of topics from idea generation, AI for small business, sustainability supports to Business Insurance updates.

On a regional level we worked with our colleagues in Cavan and Meath to deliver online seminars on accessing finance and the role of digital technologies in business. There was great interaction with businesses across the county and this will hopefully encourage more people to access our supports and schemes.

The week was an opportunity for business owners to learn from experts about the latest trends and key issues facing enterprises and to hear about how the Local Enterprise Office can provide supports to help.

On Wednesday March 6th LEO Louth and Louth County Council were one of the main sponsors of the annual Cross Border conference which this year's topic was Building a Sustainable All Ireland Economy. The event was extremely well attended with welcome addresses by Cllr Paula Butterly, Louth County Council, Cllr Valerie Harts, Chairperson of Newry, Mourne & Down District

# The Local Enterprise Office

Council, Neale Richmond TD, Conor Murphy MLA and the American Ambassador to Ireland.



## Best Innovation Award

Omuu



## Best Start Up Business

Donal Quinn, ENSO Initiatives



## National Enterprise Awards 2024 – County Level

On March 8th, the business community gathered to celebrate the winners of the County Louth Enterprise Awards. These awards recognise outstanding businesses in Louth across 4 categories with 1 chosen to go forward to the national finals to represent County Louth in the Mansion House on 23rd May 2024.

LEO Louth announced County winners of the National Enterprise Awards during Local Enterprise Week. Awards were presented to the Best Start-Up Business, Best Established Business, and an Innovation and Sustainability Award. With an Overall County finalist picked to represent Louth in the national final.

## Best Established Business Award

Zoma



Cllr Paula Butterly, David Kieran, Zoma and Pamela Kerr, Leo Louth



# The Local Enterprise Office

## Best Overall Winner



## Drogheda Digital Hub

Drogheda is poised to become a vibrant hub for innovation and entrepreneurship, thanks to the ambitious plans for the Drogheda Digital Hub, spearheaded by Louth County Council's Local Enterprise Office. This cutting-edge initiative aims to cultivate the next wave of tech innovators.

Central to the Drogheda Digital Hub is the 'Boyne Innovate' pre-start-up training and support programme. Tailored to empower budding entrepreneurs, this programme provides them with the essential skills, knowledge, and backing to transform their groundbreaking ideas into thriving businesses. Leveraging globally recognised innovation methodologies, the programme will be facilitated by a seasoned team of certified development coaches from the Regional Development Centre at DKIT.



Lavina McGahon, DKIT, Garrett Duffy, DKIT – Fionnuala Rogers, Drogheda Digital Hub Manager – Thomas Mc Evoy Louth County Council – Ronan Whitty, The Mill – Aoife Leddy, Enterprise Ireland.

Participants will benefit from a comprehensive curriculum, mentorship opportunities, and direct access to industry experts. This approach ensures that they gain deep insights into the nuances of launching and scaling a venture, enabling them to confidently navigate the entrepreneurial journey. The inaugural programme will kick off at The Mill Enterprise Centre in May of this year.

For those eager to embark on this exciting journey, expressing interest is just a click away. Visit [www.droghedadigitalhub.ie](http://www.droghedadigitalhub.ie) to complete an expression of interest and be part of this initiative.

## Speed Networking Event – 25th June 2024

Sarah Mallon represented LEO Louth at a network event hosted by Drogheda Chamber and sponsored by the Local Enterprise Office. A range of businesses from the area took part in a speed networking event in the Mill Enterprise Centre and the event was opened by the new CEO of Drogheda Chamber Hubert Murphy.



Hubert Murphy, President of Drogheda Chamber of Commerce and Sarah Mallon, Programme Manager LEO Louth attending the Speed Networking event.



# The Local Enterprise Office

## Student Enterprise Awards – Mullingar Park Hotel – 9th May 2024



## Network Louth Awards – 7th June 2024

On behalf of the Local Enterprise Office Louth, Pamela Kerr, Senior Enterprise Development Officer attended the Network Louth Awards on Friday 7th June 2024 in

the Monasterboice Inn. As LEO Louth was a sponsor to the Louth Women in Business Network Sarah Mallon, programme manager Leo Louth was Chair of the judging panel and Pamela Kerr, presented an award on the night.

## Cross Border Tourism Conference

LEO Louth were delighted to be a sponsor yet again at the annual Cross Border Tourism Conference held in Carlingford on April 17th. The theme of this year's event was Growing your visitors - Learning from the best.

The audience heard from a wide range of speakers who encouraged the tourism businesses there to innovate, digitalise and co-operate with fellow tourism attractions to help multiple the attractiveness of their offering. Pamela Kerr and Sarah Mallon represented the LEO at this event.



# The Local Enterprise Office

## Drogheda Chamber Networking Event

LEO Louth sponsored an informative networking information seminar in collaboration with Drogheda Chamber of Commerce on 5 AI Tools that will transform your Business in 2024 which was held in the Mill Enterprise Centre Drogheda on April 10th. Sarah Mallon represented the LEO office at the event which was very well attended.



## National Enterprise Awards 2024

On 23rd May 2024, the national final of the Local Enterprise Awards was held in the Mansion House, Dublin. Louth was represented by David Kieran of ZOMA and the event was attended by the Cathaoirleach, Sarah Mallon, Niamh Dennehy Business Adviser, LEO Louth office and Mr Thomas McEvoy, Director of Strategic Economic Development.

# The Local Enterprise Office

## Showcase 2024

Louth Enterprise Office supported three clients in attending Showcase Ireland 2024 which was held in the RDS in January. This is Ireland's largest trade fair for the craft and gift industry.

Showcase 2024 is not just a display of products; it's where creativity, sustainability, beautiful materials and incredible makers come together to remind Irish and international buyers how local talent can make a global splash. Visitors will find unique, handcrafted Irish products, each with its own story. From exquisite jewellery to bespoke textiles, and so much more, Showcase 2024 is the highlight of the year in Ireland's craft sector and we were thrilled to offer 3 local makers the chance to be part of it.



L-R Caoilfionn Murphy O'Hanlon from Cushla of Gullion, Fiona Lynch of Pet Cards by Almond R Designs, Sarah Mallon Louth LEO and Caroline Duffy, Caroline Duffy Designs.



L-R Caoilfionn Murphy O'Hanlon from Cushla of Gullion, Caroline Duffy, Caroline Duffy Designs and Fiona Lynch of Pet Cards by Almond R Designs

## Junior Achievement Workshop 2024

Louth County Council in conjunction with LEO held a Workshop with 6th class students from Castletown Girls National School in County Hall on Tuesday 28th May 2024. The focus of the workshop was Sustainable Energy. The girls were asked to design a sustainable festival or event and to design a blueprint and create a prototype for a wind turbine. The students were then given the opportunity to present their ideas to staff of Louth County Council including the CE and management team.



# The Local Enterprise Office

## Junior Achievement Recognition Event 2024

On 5th September 2024, in conjunction with Junior Achievement Ireland, the Local Enterprise Office organised the annual Junior Achievement Recognition Event 2024/25 in the Cooley Room in County Hall to recognise the staff of Louth County Council who volunteered during the last academic year.



(L-R) Linda Kelliher, LEO Louth, Niamh Dennehy, Leo Louth, Fiona Lennon, Climate Action Officer, Chief Executive Joan Martin, Brian Martin, Volunteer, Theresa Clarke, LEO Louth, Alan Wall, Volunteer, Sharon Keaveney, Volunteer and Tracy Fitzpatrick, Climate Action Officer



Volunteers from Louth County Council and Junior Achievement Ireland (JAI), have once again joined together to inspire over 200 students in schools across the region to reach their potential, through a series of interactive programmes. The partnership, aims to empower students to shape their own future through a positive role model from the world of work.

In the past academic year, volunteers from the Local Authority have implemented the programme in 3 national schools, namely: Knockbridge National School, Realt Na Mara, Dundalk and Ardagh National School.

At this level, these hands-on learning workshops teach children how they can impact the world around them as individuals, workers, and consumers.

The programme continues right through to secondary school, preparing students for their future careers through entrepreneurship, employability, economics, financial literacy, and STEM programmes. Louth County Council staff visited three secondary level schools: Colaiste Ris, Dundalk, O'Fiach College, Dundalk and St Joseph's Secondary School, Drogheda

## Louth Business Awards 2024

Dundalk Chamber hosted their annual business awards on 19th October 2024 in the Carrickdale hotel. LEO Louth was represented by Grainne McKeown and Theresa Clarke. Grainne McKeown presented the award sponsored by LEO Louth "Best Start Up Award" to Maureen Hoey of Mojo & Co.



(L-R) Dundalk Chamber President Patrick McCormick, Maureen Hoey Mojo & co., Grainne McKeown LEO and Thomas McDonagh, Dundalk Chamber of Commerce.

## Drogheda & District Chamber Awards 2022 – 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Drogheda & District Chamber hosted their annual business awards at the CityNorth Hotel on the 25th November 2024. LEO Louth was represented by Niall Gallagher and sponsored the award for "Best Emerging New Business" which was won by The Starlight Academy.

# The Local Enterprise Office

## VISITORS TO CO. LOUTH

### Portuguese Ambassador Visit to Louth – 24th January 2024

LEO Louth was happy to facilitate the visit of Portuguese Ambassador Bernardo Lucena together with Luis Carmo Reis, Director Ireland, Economic and Commercial Counsellor who visited Dundalk on Wednesday 24th January to discuss the potential of doing business with local businesses in the county and the opportunity to promote tourism potential of the region.



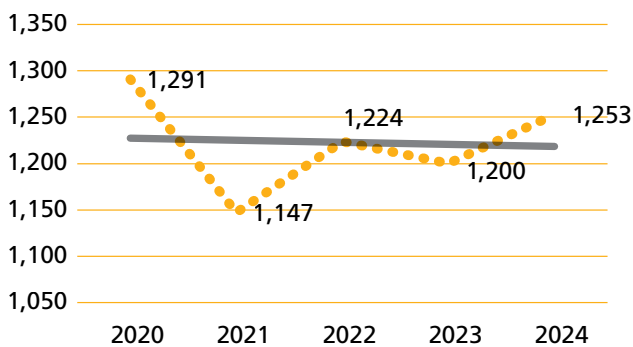
(L-R) Luis Carmo Reis, President Dundalk Chamber Una McGoey, Ambassador Bernardo Lucena, Paddy Malone PRO Chamber and Pamela Kerr Louth LEO



# Fire Service

During 2024, Louth Fire Service attended 1,253 incidents, down from 1,200 incidents in 2023. The five-year trend of incidents was slightly down, as shown in the graph below.

**Overall Incidents Attended (5-Year Trend)**



The 2024 statistics also show the following:

- Drogheda remained the busiest Fire Brigade in Louth in 2024, attending a total of 660 calls in its own area and in Meath.
- Ardee was the busiest county brigade with 95 emergency incidents attended in its own area during 2023 (and additional incidents attended in other station areas).
- Continuing high number of calls in Meath. 175 incidents in 2024.
- Large decrease in house fires compared to 2023, from 96 to 70, possibly due to community fire safety initiatives.

- Large increase in ambulance-assist calls in 2024 to 110 in 2024, up from 87 in 2023.
- Only 6 gorse fires in 2024, compared to 77 gorse fires in the peak year of 2020.

Dundalk Regional Training Centre had a busy year in 2024. Courses were run for Louth Fire Service members, including the following:

- Recruits course
- BA Wearers course
- Module 1 Officers course
- Hazardous Materials course
- Pump Operators course
- Emergency First Responder course
- ESDS Emergency Driving course



Compartment Fire Behaviour course in Hacketstown Training Centre



BA Wearers course in Dundalk Training Centre

The Fire Service purchased two new Peugeot Expert station support vehicles, to provide transport for fire crews and equipment for training and day to day operations and support at emergency incidents.

They can transport up to six operational personnel and carry critical firefighting and rescue equipment. They are low-emissions vehicles running on hydrated vegetable oil (HVO), which is in accordance with the Council's Climate Action Plan.

The Fire Service received DHLGH approval for a major upgrade of Dundalk Regional Training Centre.

# Fire Service



CFO Eamon Woulfe, Cathaoirleach Kevin Callan, SO Mark McElearney and SACFO Robert Page with the new Support Vehicles at Drogheda fire station

A Design Team was appointed, and progress was made on the following elements:

- Two-storey extension to the existing training building
- Extension to the breathing apparatus training building and conversion to gas-fired combustion
- New training tower
- Resurfacing of the yard

The design has been completed, and a Stage 1 report will be submitted to the DHLGH with a request for approval to proceed to the detailed design and planning stage. It is expected that construction will take place during 2026.

During 2024, Louth County Council went to tender for a four-year framework for the supply of fire gear to Louth Fire Service. Three tenders were received, and the Fire Service finalised the contract with the successful tenderer for the supply of 140 sets of fire gear. The same company also provides care and maintenance of Louth Fire Service fire gear.

A range of measures were implemented to safeguard fire service personnel from any health risks that may be present during emergency incidents. These included the following:

- Increased respiratory protection
- Removal of contaminated fire gear after the incident and transport back in the side locker of the appliance.
- 'Clean cab concept', with cab filtration systems installed
- Decontamination of BA sets, helmets and gloves in new decontamination washing machines

Louth Fire Service has ordered two new fire tenders from Emergency One in Scotland under the DHLGH capital programme. The locker layouts were agreed, and these new appliances will be delivered during 2025.

There was a large increase in Fire Safety Certificate applications processed in 2024 to 233 applications, up from 152 applications in 2023.

There was a similar large increase in Disabled Access Certificate applications processed by the Building Control Section from 103 in 2023 to 139 in 2024.

## Civil Defence

There were 48 Community Duties during 2024, where Civil Defence provided medical cover. These included the All-Ireland Poc Fada, Europa League Final and Dundalk Agricultural Show.



Louth Civil Defence volunteers at Duties during 2024



Louth Civil Defence responded to 71 medical emergencies under the Community First Responder Callout Agreement (999 calls).

Two missing person searches were attended when notified by An Garda Síochána. Volunteers used drones and a search dog from Meath Civil Defence.

# Fire Service

There were many training events locally while Louth Civil Defence instructors delivered Emergency Medical Technician upskilling and assisting with exams to volunteers in other counties.

The following training courses were delivered:

- 3 Cardiac First Responder Advanced
- 6 Cardiac First Responder Community
- 4 Manual Handling and 1 People Handling
- 1 Emergency First Responder
- 1 First Aid Responder
- 1 Swiftwater First Responder
- 56 non-certified training events (weekly training)

During the year Louth Civil Defence took delivery of a new Polaris Ranger utility vehicle as well as a new DJI M30T drone, both of which will significantly enhance capabilities.

Louth Civil Defence welcomed 19 new recruits in 2024 and also rolled out a new style uniform issue.

Two Louth Civil Defence volunteers, James Neary and Michael Kenny, were presented with medals by An Tánaiste Michael Martin honouring 60 years of service to Civil Defence in March 2024.





5



# Placemaking and Physical Development

The ICT Department continued to support all IT systems that facilitate business processes during 2024.



# Placemaking and Physical Development

## Directorate Description

Placemaking and Physical Development Directorate manages many of the most visible services provided by the Council across three core teams, namely Roads & Local Services, Placemaking and Physical Development.

Roads & Local Services deliver on the annual Road Works Programme, which primarily centres on the maintenance and improvement of the regional and local road network in the County, but also includes bridge rehabilitation projects, drainage works and traffic calming measures. Street cleaning, maintenance of our award-winning public parks and playgrounds, harbours and piers and the upkeep of a number of cemeteries across the county are also delivered through our Roads & Local Services team, while a key operational role in Louth County Council's overall response to severe weather events is provided through this team.

Our Placemaking team is developing projects to regenerate our town and village centres and addressing vacancy and dereliction. Numerous projects are being advanced through the Urban Regeneration and Rural Regeneration Development Funds respectively, both at design and construction stages, while additional playground provision across the County is also being progressed. In addition, the implementation of the government's Town Centre First policy at local level is being delivered through the Placemaking team, with the establishment and support to Town Centre First Town Teams and the development of Town Centre First Plans.

The Physical development team are providing key infrastructural projects to enable the development of new residential communities, the economic development of the County, and the development of Drogheda and Dundalk as regional growth centres. Projects include key capital road projects, greenways, Active Travel and Flood Relief projects. In addition, a number of cross border capital projects between Louth County Council and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council are being advanced through our Physical Development team.

## PLACEMAKING & PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AT A GLANCE

<b>253</b>	Abnormal Load permits issued
<b>30</b>	Hoarding (scaffolding) licences Issued
<b>73</b>	Skip permits issued
<b>4</b>	Funfair licences issued
<b>97</b>	Events licensed by the Section in 2023
<b>21</b>	Section 254 licence for outdoor furniture issued

## PORT ACCESS NORTHERN CROSS ROUTE (PANCR)

Phase 1 of the PANCR commenced construction in 2023 and opened to traffic in March 2024. The first phase of the PANCR comprises of two km of new roadway, 9m in width and incorporating footways and cycle lanes, together with two roundabouts located on the intersections of the Twenties Lane and Ballymakenny Road. The scheme also includes for the upgrade of sections of the Ballymakenny Road (c.1km) and the Twenties Lane (c.0.6km).

The scheme was constructed by a consortium of developers, PANCR Development Limited, and Contractor Housing Infrastructure Services Company, HISCO, (utilising Clonmel Enterprises). The scheme is ultimately financed by Louth County Council through the North Drogheda Development Contribution Scheme.

## NARROW WATER BRIDGE (NWB)

A Marine Construction License was received from Department of Environment, Agriculture and Rural Affairs in March 2024 allowing for the Awarded of the main Contract in April 2024 for a period of 3½ years.

An official launch of the construction period took place on the 4th of June and was attended by the Taoiseach and the Tánaiste.

Works commenced on the Southern and Northern abutment for the scheme and continued throughout 2025. Marine piling and bridge fabrication is to commence in 2025 with ongoing reinforced concrete works for the two abutment and temporary supports works.

Throughout 2024 ongoing engagement with key stakeholders, (landowners, Department of Infrastructure Northern Ireland, Warrenpoint Harbour Authority, Loughs Agency, etc) took place, and North South Ministerial Subgroups meeting for the project also took place.

## DROGHEDA CIVIC OFFICES PHASE 1

Construction continued throughout 2024 on the redevelopment of the Drogheda Civic Offices, Phase 1 and was completed and opened to the public in September 2024.

The project consists of the dismantling, demolition and extensive conservation works on protected structures, upgrade works and construction of a new link building at Drogheda Civic Offices.

The project will include.

- Refurbishment of the existing former council chamber building (Block B), 54 Fair Street, this is a two-storey protected structure.
- Refurbishment of the existing community services

# Placemaking and Physical Development

building (Block C), 55-56 Fair Street, this is a two-storey protected structure.

- Demolition of Valhalla Theatre Building, retention of brickwork and slates for reuse on Blocks B and C for conservation purposes.
- Construction of a new Link Building (Block N), this will connect the protected buildings on both the ground floor and first floor via a mezzanine.
- Extensive landscape external works to the front and back of the buildings which will also include an ESB substation.



Building Design Partnership (BDP) were the appointed Architects who managed a range of multi disciplines in completing this complex project. The construction works are being undertaken by Townlink.

## **N53 - DUNDALK TO CASTLEBLAYNEY ROAD PHASE 4. HACKBALLSCROSS TO RASSAN**

The design team continued with detailed design in 2024 and commencement of tender documentation. An advanced works contract for site clearance commenced in Jan 2024 and was completed by March 1st. Archaeology site investigation works commenced in 2024 along the route throughout 2023 with Technical Approval Reports approved by Transport Infrastructure Ireland. The design team continues to engage with the landowners, their agents, and other stakeholders. Tender documents for both hedge removal and Archaeology were issued to the market toward the end of December 2023 and it is envisaged that these contracts will commence in early 2024. A Notice to Enter will be issued in advance of these works to the affected landowners.

## **DROGHEDA AND BALTRAY FLOOD RELIEF SCHEME**

Louth County Council, in partnership with the Office of Public Works, appointed RPS Consulting Engineers Ltd to the Scheme. When complete, the scheme will afford

protection to 249 residential and 205 non-residential properties during flood events. The Project is currently in the first of five stages — Stage I: Identification and Development of a Preferred Scheme.

The Steering Group continue to collect data to ensure the most accurate and up to date information is used to inform the technical analyses being undertaken to meet the project objectives. Additional topographical surveying was carried out in November 2023 in the Beaulieu Village area.

After incorporating the additional topographical survey data from the Beaulieu Village area into the hydraulic model, RPS are completing the calibration of the modelled river network within Drogheda and Baltray. This ensures that the model can simulate historical flood events and provides an accurate representation of the rivers and flooding mechanisms in the area.

A draft Hydraulic Analysis report was produced and commented on by the Steering group in 2023. The Hydraulic Analysis report provides details on how the model was constructed and calibrated for future use in the project.

Preliminary Ground Investigation works were mainly completed in 2023. These works will inform optioneering for the scheme. An otter survey has been completed and an overwintering bird survey commenced in October 2023 and will continue until March 2024. These investigations will provide data to inform the scheme analysis and development phase of the project.

## **Dundalk and Ardee Flood Relief Scheme**

Louth County Council, in partnership with the Office of Public Works, appointed Binnies and Nicholas O'Dwyer as a Joint Venture to the Scheme. When complete it will afford protection to 1,887 residential and 176 non-residential properties during flood events. The project is currently in the first of five stages — Stage I: Identification and Development of a Preferred Scheme.

Through 2023 progress is being made in terms of environmental surveys and assessments, flood modelling and optioneering for both Schemes. Information collated from flooding and the impacts from Storm Ciarán in late 2023 was incorporated in the hydraulic modelling, improving the understanding of the flooding mechanisms. It was used to further verify the hydraulic model outputs.

In 2023 hydraulic modelling and wave overtopping analysis continue for Dundalk with the baseline modelling for certain flood events completed. Flood cells have been delineated given the greater understanding of the dominant mechanisms of flooding in each area of the Scheme. New developments have been also identified in

# Placemaking and Physical Development

the Dundalk catchment. It is envisaged that optioneering for Dundalk will commence in Q2 of 2024.

A second round of wintering and migratory bird surveys was procured and commenced in October 2023, following the first round of surveys. Similarly bat activity surveys, snails and terrestrial mammals reports for Dundalk are now completed.

Site investigation surveys for 2024 are currently being scoped for the Dundalk Study Area. With a view these works having the minimum impact on the existing environment and cultural heritage, assessments are being prepared to establish the best practices to undertake the works.

The preliminary environmental site assessment report and the geomorphology report are finalised for Ardee scheme. A draft hydraulics and options and scheme viability report for Ardee was submitted toward the end of 2023 and will be assessed by Louth County Council and the OPW, where it is envisaged that a final report for Ardee will be published in Q2 of 2024.

## Obelisk Bridge Refurbishment Project

Significant refurbishment works to the Obelisk Bridge, which was constructed in 1869, commenced in August 2023 with the appointment of Jons Civil Engineer to complete the work. The Obelisk Bridge is a listed structure of historical importance and is in need of maintenance/ refurbishment works. The bridge is a single line carriageway (approx. 4m in width and 39m in length), and currently has a 5-tonne weight limit on it. The bridge paint system is showing signs of failure and structural iron members have areas of high corrosion. There are lattice web members with 100% section loss and cross-girders are demonstrating delamination at flange locations.

To prolong the design life of the bridge and ensure the serviceability of the structure as part of the local road's infrastructure within County Louth / Meath, the following rehabilitation works are required:

In 2023 works commenced on the encapsulation of the bridge as to ensure no detritus materials fall into the environmentally sensitive waters of the Boyne River. The removal of the bridge deck was completed, and sand blasting and paint undercoating of steel members is ongoing. Removal of steel members which have deteriorated beyond serviceability and similarly repair of salvageable members is underway and will continue into 2024. The works are expected to be completed in May 2024 and a road closure is in place until this time.

## Ardee Educate Together School

In June 2023 Louth County Council, working in under a service level agreement with the Department of Education, signed a significant construction contract with McDermott and Treaty Construction to construct a new Educate Together school in Ardee. The construction contract worth €7.6m will deliver twelve classrooms and special need units and all associated administrative and ancillary accommodation, including the construction of a section of carriageway of the N52 in Ardee. Works in 2023 include for site clearance, commencement of utilities, drainage, and the access road. Works commenced on the foundations for the main building in late 2023. The construction is expected to take 21 months.

## Carlingford Lough Greenway

The Carlingford Lough Greenway project comprises the creation of c.10.1 km of new cross-border greenway, linking Newry City in Northern Ireland to Carlingford village in Ireland. The new stretch will link with the previously completed Portadown to Newry element resulting in a total length of 52km of cross border Greenway along the East coast of the island of Ireland. The scheme is a joint project with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and East Border Region, with Louth County Council as lead partner. The project is primarily financed by the European Union's INTERREG VA Programme.

In September 2023 works commenced works on the section of the greenway from the border to Omeath and the section from Carlingford Marina to Carlingford Village. In Northern Ireland planning permission for a boardwalk element was granted in October 2023 and a section of greenway at Victoria Lock and Rough Island has been completed.

Towards the end of 2023 the main contractor, Glas Construction completed site clearance, formation levels, drainage, culvert works. A considerable amount of fencing was substantially completed in December 2023. It is envisaged that the section of greenway in Co. Louth will gain substantial completion in Q2 of 2024 while the construction of the boardwalk in Northern Ireland will be completed by August 2024.

TII approved funding for asset renewals on Greenway between Omeath and Carlingford Marina. The 2024 works contract provided for the construction of the following works;

- Resurfacing existing greenway with Bituminous Surface to DN-GEO-03047-03 Pavement Type A1. Milling of existing road and overlaying

# Placemaking and Physical Development

- Fence repairs
- Access control measures

## PUBLIC REALM

### St. Nicholas Quarter Phase I

BDP Ltd are the appointed Urban Design Team for Phase 1 of the St. Nicholas Quarter project. This project, funded under Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF) and match funded by Louth County Council, involves the enhancement of the public realm along Bridge Street, Linenhall Street and the Peace Park.

Part 8 approval of the project was received in April 2018. This project is building on the completed Clanbrasil Street project to further enhance the experience of those living, working, and visiting Dundalk town centre. Glas Civil Engineering Ltd. are the appointed contractors and work commenced on site in August 2024 and will be ongoing for 15 months. The public realm works are being delivered on a phased basis to minimise impact on the local businesses and community.



### Westgate Vision, Drogheda

The Westgate Vision planning preparation stage has been financially supported by the Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF) as part of Project Ireland 2040 and match funded by Louth County Council. Westgate Vision is a priority project for Louth County Council. The Westgate Planning application, with designs for character areas Westgate, Medieval Wall, Riverfront and the Old Abbey, was submitted to An Bord Pleanála in December 2023 and is awaiting determination.



### St. Nicholas Quarter Phase II

BDP Ltd were appointed in 2024 as consultant team, following the tender process for design stage of Phase 2 of the St. Nicholas Quarter project. The project involves initial feasibility, analysis and preparation of a design concept for the re-development of the Backlands area of the St. Nicholas Quarter. The accepted concept will then be developed to Part 8 planning with full public consultation. A town health check has been completed on the area and initial summary report completed by the design team in addition stakeholder and public.

### Omeath Placemaking Scheme

The Omeath Placemaking Scheme completed during 2024, was funded through the Rural Regeneration Development fund (RRDF) and match funded by Louth County Council. The project, on a site area of approximately 10,000 sqm, involved Public Realm enhancement works. Works included new paving and road surface finishes, feature lighting, seating, landscaping, alterations to existing drainage and utility infrastructure. The project enhanced pedestrian accessibility and safety through the village with the creation of new crossing points, footpaths and enhancing linkages to the Omeath Greenway. The

# Placemaking and Physical Development

project supports the economic and social regeneration, increasing footfall and maximising the tourism potential of the village.



## Ardee 2040, Ardee

Under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF) funding was received to carry out feasibility and preliminary design of the public realm and amenity lands and to seek planning permission for these extensive works in Ardee. This project has developed a plan to transform the town from its traditional manufacturing centre to a community centred town with defined character areas highlighting the distinct heritage of the town.

Turley Planning was appointed as consultants to form a design team to develop exciting plans to improve the streetscape and amenity of Ardee with a focus on four key sites: Main Street; Ash Walk; the Old Railway; and amenity lands to the east of the town to allow planning consent to be received.

The initial design proposals and reports have been completed and have been going through pre-planning approvals with TII in 2024.



## Living in Carlingford Visiting Carlingford

Under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF) funding was received to carry out feasibility and preliminary design of the public realm and vision for the Carlingford area. Designs were completed for three-character areas: Gateway; Town Square; and the Recreation area. The project plans to enhance the connectivity and visual routes for pedestrians in the area with improved public spaces that can be used for a variety of events and activities. Part 8 Planning was completed in 2023 and project progressed to detail design in 2024

## Public Realm Works around St. Laurence's Gate, Drogheda

A preliminary design for the public realm around St. Laurence's Gate has been developed to create an outdoor space for gatherings and performances and to offset the gate as a heritage asset. Environmental surveys have been completed in 2024 and engagement with the National Monuments Service for ministerial consent has commenced.



# Placemaking and Physical Development

## Play Spaces

A new playground was completed and opened in Termonfeckin in 2024. The project was part-funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development through the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, with matched funding from Louth County Council. The playground is inclusive for people of different abilities, with accessible play equipment including a wheelchair carousel and ability trampoline. Design and installation works were led by KOMPAN, a commercial playground equipment manufacturer.



## TOWN CENTRE FIRST

### Dunleer Town Centre First Plan

As part of the Town Centre First (TCF) policy funding was secured to create a Town Centre First Plan for Dunleer. The project involved extensive consultation and engagement with the community and stakeholders in Dunleer. The plan was developed in conjunction with the Town Team for Dunleer which is made up of local citizens and stakeholders. Building Design Partnership (BDP) were appointed to lead on the design and presentation of the



plan. The plan highlights a number of different projects and initiatives that if implemented could bring about positive change for Dunleer. The plan was finalised and launched in May 2024. The Town Team and the Council are now moving forward to implement some of the proposals in the plan.

### Clogherhead Town Centre First Plan

Clogherhead received funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) to implement a Town Centre First plan. This forms part of the second phase of the Town Centre First Programme. The plan will look at how the natural assets of Clogherhead can be maximised for the benefit of the community and visitors. Building Design Partnership were appointed as part of a multi-disciplinary design team to lead on the plan. This year stakeholder engagement and the formation of a Town Team has taken place as well as a well-attended public consultation session. Traffic surveys, accessibility audits and vacancy surveys have taken place among other surveys. The plan will be finalised and launched in 2025.



### Town Centre Health Checks

Under the Town Centre First Town Team Support Fund funding was secured to complete Town Centre Health Checks to Collon and Castlebellingham. Craftstudio Architecture were appointed to lead on the creation of the two documents. Work is ongoing to create a snapshot of the current status of each town. This will include surveys covering land-use, carparking, vehicle count, accessibility audit, desire line assessment and SCOT analysis. The health checks will be complete by March 2025.

# Placemaking and Physical Development

## URDF Call 3

Funding was secured via Call 3 of the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF). The fund aims to support the regeneration of urban areas, particularly those that have experienced economic challenges or population decline. It is designed to foster sustainable urban development, improve urban infrastructure, and promote social and economic vitality in cities and towns across Ireland. Louth County Council received €7,000,000 in funding under the URDF scheme. A total of 128 properties in Drogheda and Dundalk have been identified and approved as part of the scheme. Engagement with owners by the Town Regeneration Officer (TRO) and Vacant Homes Officer (VHO) of those properties to outline the scheme and other funding opportunities is ongoing. Engagement has led to a number of properties being activated by being occupied, put up for sale, sold as well as entering the planning process.

A concentrated effort is now being made to home in on derelict and vacant properties that can benefit from the local authority purchasing them from owners either via agreement or via compulsory purchase with a view to returning them to use in an efficient and timely manner.

## Ardee Castle

Louth County Council received funding from the Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF) to carry out a restoration and refurbishment project for Ardee Castle.

The project will include

- Refurbishment works to the 16th Century tower house
- The creation of a new fully accessible entrance via the adjacent building known as the judges chambers
- The creation of a new extension to the rear of the National Monument that will allow for a centrally located vertical circulation core. This will allow safe access to all levels within the historic tower house.

Ministerial Consent as well as Part 8 Planning are both now in place. The project has been tendered towards the end of the year with a main contractor for the full works due to be appointed in Quarter 1 2025.



## Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme (THRIVE)

In 2024, Drogheda became one of 26 town centres nationally set to benefit from the Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme (THRIVE), awarded under Ireland's two European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Regional Programmes.

Thrive aims to allow Local Authorities and citizens to reimagine and revitalise town centres through the renovation and reuse of publicly owned vacant or derelict heritage buildings.

Louth County Council have been successful in obtaining funding under Strand 1 and have appointed Shaffrey Architects as lead on a multi-disciplinary design team to assist in developing:

- An Integrated urban strategy that looks at enhancement strategies within Drogheda heritage core

# Placemaking and Physical Development

- Identification of projects that promote the conservation and adaptive reuse of built heritage stock while reducing vacancy and dereliction in town centres
- The design and part 8 planning procedure for a heritage building in the town centre

Following a public consultation event in Drogheda Civic Offices in November 2024 and ongoing focussed stakeholder engagement, Louth County Council are continuing to work towards a Part 8 planning application and an application for capital funding in 2025.

## Dunleer Project Development Measure

Funding was received under the Town Centre First Project Development Measure for Dunleer. The project selected an element taken from the completed Town Centre First Plan and sought funding to bring it through from concept design to Part 8 Planning. The project will create a new public space beside the newly completed Dunleer Library. The creation of the library Square was a significant element brought forward from the community consultations carried out as part of Dunleer Town Centre First process.



## PARKS

The parks department carried out the following works in 2024.

Maintaining green flag status for four of our parks in County Louth: for Blackrock Park, St. Helena Park, St Dominic's Park and Icehouse Hill Park.

150 trees planted and 500 hanging baskets were displayed in in our two urban areas of Dundalk and Drogheda.

The implementation of a programme for the treatment and control of Japanese knot weed — a total of c.2050m<sup>2</sup> was treated in various areas around the county.

Ongoing provision of advice, support and on the ground assistance to Tidy Towns groups, allotment group and other relevant stake holders throughout the year.

Ongoing inspections, refurbishment works and maintenance of playgrounds throughout the county.

150,000 of various species of spring bulbs were planted in different location around the county.

The team continued with its intensive maintenance programme in respect of grass cutting, arboriculture programme (wood plants pruning and felling).

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# Support Services

The ICT Department continued to support all IT systems that facilitate business processes during 2024.



# Information Technology

## SYSTEMS

ICT completed the rollout of Office 365 to all staff and elected members and decommissioned the legacy on premises Exchange environment. The ICT Department completed the implementation of a new Hyper Converged Infrastructure to upgrade our storage, virtual, and Disaster Recovery environment. The Councils server and network infrastructure were managed and upgraded, where necessary, to ensure reliability.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

Hybrid Meeting Technology has been installed in the Council Chambers in County Hall and Town Hall Dundalk and Civic Offices Drogheda. Hybrid Council Meetings and special Planning Meetings in relation to the Dundalk Development Plan process have been held successfully. The chambers have also been utilised to facilitate hybrid meetings for cross border and multi-authority initiatives.

The ICT Department worked to ensure that all ICT requirements were in place and functioning in time for the opening of the Civic Offices in Drogheda. This work including the implementation of hybrid technology in meeting rooms, all network work to ensure the LCC network extend to the refurbished parts of the buildings, implementation of Wi-Fi access points, assisted with the moves of all IT hardware, phones, printers etc for the move of the Customer Services and Motor Tax functions to the new Customer Services areas.

The LCC IT Team worked to remove the need for all point to point and radio connections to all sites on the LCC network, through the implementation of SD Wan Technology in remote sites. This has improved the performance of the network in these remote sites and has future proofed the reliability of the service to these sites, as well as reducing the annual costs to provide network connectivity to these sites. The decommissioning of legacy equipment relating to the point-to-point technology has also been undertaken.

## CYBER SECURITY

The ICT department continued to focus on security in 2024. Work was prioritised based on the outcome of a cyber security baseline assessment conducted in 2023. Continued Cyber Security Training is issued to staff regularly. We completed onboarding to a national SIEM-SOC-SOAR system.

## SIEM

A SIEM is a Security information and event management security solution that helps organisations detect threats before they disrupt business. SIEM technology collects event log data from a range of sources, identifies activity that deviates from the norm with real-time analysis

## SOC

A SOC is a Security Operation Centre. This means that there is 24/7/365 monitoring of the LCC Network. ICT staff are notified where security alerts occurring, the method and speed of notification corresponds with the severity of the event. LCC have worked with the provider throughout the year to fine tune the system and have responded to a large volume of alerts.

## SOAR

Louth County Council have also completed onboarding to a SOAR — security orchestration, automation and response solution. Several automated playbooks have been configured and tested – which will facilitate a timely containment and response to security incidents.

## GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

GIS Staff from the ICT Section have worked closely with Forward Planning to assist with the delivery of maps required for the Draft Dundalk Development Plan. The GIS team carried out many spatial data analysis exercises to provide insights into the plan area. The GIS team also built and published a public map viewer of the draft zoning map which has assisted with the public consultation process.

## ONLINE MAP VIEWERS

The GIS section have worked to create several online map viewers which are published on the LCC Website, these included Breastfeeding Friendly Map Viewer an Age Friendly Map Viewer and the Winter Gritting Map Viewer. These projects involve implementing a system so that the business sections can update their databases, and the data will be automatically updated on the public map viewers.

## BURIALS PUBLIC DASHBOARD


The GIS Team are nearing completion of the development of an interactive online dashboard which will allow the public to search the, over 21,000, burial records for Saint Patrick's Cemetery, Dowdallshill, Dundalk. This project involved a significant amount of analysis to quality check the burial record information.



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# Appendices

1. Financial Statements & Expenditure by Division
  2. Statement of Financial Position
  3. Summary of Major Revenue Collections for 2024
  4. Conference Attendance
  5. Payments to Members of Louth County Council
  6. Statement of Internal Financial Control (SIFC)
  7. Corporate Plan Progress Report
  8. Performance Indicators
  9. Governance Statement 2024
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# Financial Statements & Expenditure by Division

For year ending 31st of December 2024

The Income and Expenditure Account Statement brings together all the revenue related income and expenditure. It shows the surplus/(deficit) for the year. Transfers to/from reserves are shown separately and not allocated by service division. Note 16 allocates transfers by service division in the same format as Table A of the adopted Local Authority budget.

## Expenditure by Division

	Notes	Gross Expenditure	Income	Net Expenditure	Net Expenditure
		2024	2024	2024	2023
		€	€	€	€
Housing & Building		66,187,364	68,311,181	(2,123,817)	(1,566,597)
Roads Transportation & Safety		28,905,979	17,418,649	11,487,330	11,227,953
Water Services		6,739,509	6,568,207	171,302	125,716
Development Management		32,928,954	25,034,458	7,894,496	6,405,875
Environmental Services		20,509,028	4,161,822	16,347,207	15,874,088
Recreation & Amenity		10,011,677	1,500,488	8,511,189	7,926,573
Agriculture, Food and the Marine		934,596	588,420	346,176	495,153
Miscellaneous Services		7,847,215	9,585,406	(1,738,191)	(3,569,209)
<b>Total Expenditure/Income</b>	15	<b>174,064,323</b>	<b>133,168,630</b>		
<b>Net cost of Divisions to be funded from</b>				<b>40,895,693</b>	36,919,553
Rates & Local Property Tax					
Rates				34,754,545	34,331,121
Local Property Tax				11,366,197	9,866,199
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year before Transfers	16			<b>5,225,050</b>	7,277,767
Transfers from/(to) Reserves	14			(5,046,234)	(7,080,846)
<b>Overall Surplus/(Deficit) for Year</b>				<b>178,816</b>	196,921
General Reserve @ 1st January 2024				4,159,761	3,962,840
<b>General Reserve @ 31st December 2024</b>				<b>4,338,577</b>	4,159,761

# Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) at 31st of December 2024

	Notes	2024 €	2023 €
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	1		
Operational		868,059,978	797,036,640
Infrastructural		1,370,498,143	1,355,364,519
Community		4,281,414	4,293,709
Non-Operational		31,010,671	39,563,171
		<b>2,273,850,206</b>	<b>2,196,258,039</b>
<b>Work in Progress and Preliminary Expenses</b>	2	124,710,284	77,627,687
<b>Long Term Debtors</b>	3	185,631,651	174,198,075
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Stocks	4	-	-
Trade Debtors & Prepayments	5	47,208,038	62,740,093
Bank Investments		106,544,239	78,425,195
Cash at Bank		9,384,906	9,344,897
Cash in Transit		151,536	311,595
		<b>163,288,719</b>	<b>150,821,780</b>
<b>Current Liabilities (Amounts falling due within one year)</b>			
Bank Overdraft		-	-
Creditors & Accruals	6	47,181,334	50,387,004
Finance Leases		-	-
		<b>47,181,334</b>	<b>50,387,004</b>
<b>Net Current Assets / (Liabilities)</b>		<b>116,107,385</b>	<b>100,434,775</b>
<b>Creditors (Amounts falling due after more than one year)</b>			
Loans Payable	7	98,925,926	103,618,920
Finance Leases		—	—
Refundable deposits	8	24,384,876	21,086,699
Other		121,147,723	107,373,329
		<b>244,458,525</b>	<b>232,078,948</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>2,455,841,000</b>	<b>2,316,439,628</b>
<b>Represented by</b>			
Capitalisation Account	9	2,273,850,206	2,196,258,039
Income WIP	2	122,618,274	81,303,521
General Revenue Reserve		4,338,577	4,159,761
Other Specific Reserves		469,071	469,071
Other Balances	10	54,564,873	34,249,236
<b>Total Reserves</b>		<b>2,455,841,000</b>	<b>2,316,439,628</b>

# Summary of Major Revenue Collections for 2024

A Debtor type	B Incoming arrears @ 1/1/2024	C Accrued - current year debit (Gross)	D Vacant property adjustments	E Write offs	F Waivers and Credits	G Total for collection =(B+C-D- E-F)	H Amount collected	I Closing arrears @ 31/12/2024 = (G-H)	J Specific doubtful arrears*	K % Collected = (H)/(G-J)
	€	€	€	€	€	€	€	€	€	
<b>Rates</b>	5,352,580	34,754,545	2,143,931	133,890	351,471	37,477,833	32,011,721	5,466,111	629,789	<b>87%</b>
<b>Rents &amp; Annuities</b>	2,913,161	16,325,958	—	87,794	—	19,151,324	16,052,800	3,098,524	—	<b>84%</b>
<b>Housing Loans</b>	297,248	2,177,489	—	101,475	—	2,373,262	2,072,498	300,764	—	<b>87%</b>

\*Specific doubtful arrears = (i) Vacancy applications pending/criteria not met & (ii) Accounts in examinership/receivership/liquidation.

# Conference Attendance

Title	Dates	Members Attended	Travel & Subs Cost	Conference Cost	Total Cost
<b>Conferences At Home</b>					
Celtic Conferences 'The Irish Housing Crisis' O' Donovan's Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork	02-04/02/2024	Pio Smith	€570.00	€130.00	<b>€700.00</b>
<b>Training</b>					
LAMA Spring Seminar - Abbey Hotel, Donegal Town, Donegal	19-20/01/2024	Jim Tenanty	€498.04	€160.00	<b>€658.04</b>
	—	Pio Smith	€550.14	€160.00	<b>€710.14</b>
	—	Declan Power	€552.21	€160.00	<b>€712.21</b>
	—	James Byrne	€355.88	€160.00	<b>€515.88</b>
LAMA Autumn Conference - New Grange Hotel, Navan	17-18/10/2024	Paddy McQuillan	€70.20	€170.00	<b>€240.20</b>
	—	Jim Tenanty	€141.11	€170.00	<b>€311.11</b>
AILG Module 1 - Greenhills Conference & Leisure Centre, Limerick	27/01/2024	Jim Tenanty	€392.35	€85.00	<b>€477.35</b>
	—	Pio Smith	€442.39	€85.00	<b>€527.39</b>
AILG Annual Training Conference - Arklow Bay Hotel, Co. Wicklow	14-15/02/2024	Emma Cutlip	€289.92	€170.00	<b>€459.92</b>
	—	James Byrne	€134.43	€170.00	<b>€304.43</b>
	—	Declan Power	€348.38	€170.00	<b>€518.38</b>
	—	Jim Tenanty	€421.50	€170.00	<b>€591.50</b>
	—	Pio Smith	€316.99	€170.00	<b>€486.99</b>
AILG Module 2 - Hotel Kilkenny, College Road, Kilkenny	21/03/2024	Emma Cutlip	€75.95	€85.00	<b>€160.95</b>
AILG Module 2 - Hudson Bay Hotel, Athlone	23/03/2024	Pio Smith	€197.93	€85.00	<b>€282.93</b>
	—	James Byrne	€147.56	€85.00	<b>€232.56</b>
AILG Module 3 - Induction Training - Mullingar Park Hotel	11/07/2024	Paddy McQuillan	€65.10	€85.00	<b>€150.10</b>
AILG Module 3 - Induction Training - Radison Hotel, Cork	13/07/2024	Pio Smith	€728.11	€85.00	<b>€813.11</b>
AILG Autumn Training Seminar '24 - Hillgrove Hotel, Monaghan	11-12/09/2024	Pio Smith	€459.99	€170.00	<b>€629.99</b>
	—	James Byrne	€78.12	€170.00	<b>€248.12</b>
	—	Declan Power	€396.15	€170.00	<b>€566.15</b>
	—	Jim Tenanty	€367.79	€170.00	<b>€537.79</b>
	—	Paddy McQuillan	€165.77	€170.00	<b>€335.77</b>
AILG Module 4 - Bridge House Hotel, Tullamore	28/09/2024	James Byrne	€223.28	€85.00	<b>€308.28</b>
	—	Pio Smith	€440.01	€85.00	<b>€525.01</b>
AILG Module 5 Training - Sligo Park Hotel, Sligo	24/10/2024	Jim Tenanty	€212.44	€85.00	<b>€297.44</b>
AILG Module 5 Training - Radison Blue Hotel, Limerick	02/11/2024	Pio Smith	€528.82	€85.00	<b>€613.82</b>
	—	James Byrne	€400.65	€85.00	<b>€485.65</b>
	16/11/2024	Jim Tenanty	€511.21	€85.00	<b>€596.21</b>
AILG Module 6 - Claregalway Hotel, Co. Galway	—	Pio Smith	€633.85	€85.00	<b>€718.85</b>
	—	James Byrne	€384.81	€85.00	<b>€469.81</b>

# Conference Attendance (continued)

Title	Dates	Members Attended	Travel & Subs Cost	Conference Cost	Total Cost
<b>Attendance Other Meetings</b>					
I.P.B. Insurance Members Meeting - Mullingar	04/10/2024	Pio Smith	€119.83	Nil	<b>€119.83</b>
Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor - Hillsborough Castle, Belfast	05/12/2024	Shane McGuinness	€72.54	Nil	<b>€72.54</b>
Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor - Fingal Co. Co.	17/09/2024	Shane McGuinness	€76.90	Nil	<b>€76.90</b>
Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor - Fingal Co. Co.	17/09/2024	Declan Power	€53.89	Nil	<b>€53.89</b>
Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor - Hillsborough Castle, Belfast	05/12/2024	Declan Power	€103.64	Nil	<b>€103.64</b>
<b>Foreign Travel</b>					
New York	14-18/03/2024	Cllr. Paula Butterly	€3,048.48	Nil	<b>€3,048.48</b>
	—	Cllr. Kevin Callan	€2,858.29	Nil	<b>€2,858.29</b>
	—	Cllr. Dolores Minogue	€2,975.94	Nil	<b>€2,975.94</b>
	—	Cllr. Sean Kelly	€2,975.94	Nil	<b>€2,975.94</b>
St. Mandes, France	16-18/02/2024	Kevin Callan	€490.23	Nil	<b>€490.23</b>
St. Mandes, France	06-09/09/2024	Kevin Callan	€184.40	Nil	<b>€184.40</b>
St. Mandes, France	06-09/09/2024	Paddy McQuillan	€182.40	Nil	<b>€184.40</b>

# Payments to Members of Louth County Council

<b>Payments to Members of Louth County Council</b>		<b>Amount</b>
1	Number of Council & Committee Meetings	86
2	Annual Expenses, Allowance (travel, subsistence & misc.) Expenses (e.g. postage, including vouched expenses).	
	Total of expenses paid to members in respect of attendance of meetings of the Council and its committees	€148,418.72
3	Representational Payment	€860,592.45
4	Chairpersons Allowance	€20,000.00
5	Vice Chairpersons Allowance	€4,000.00
6	Chairpersons of SPC's/MPC's	€30,000.00
7	Chairpersons of Municipal Districts	€30,000.00
8	Member of Municipal District Allowance	NIL
9	Mobile/Blackberry Phones & Broadband	€16,211.08
10	Expenses on Conference & Training etc. attended:	
	Home	€15,972.05
	Abroad	€12,717.68

# Statement of Internal Financial Control (SIFC)

## INTRODUCTION

I, David Conway, Chief Executive of Louth County Council am responsible for the annual financial statement (AFS), prepared by the Director of Finance, in accordance with the accounting code of practice issued by the Minister under section 107 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

I certify that the financial statements of Louth County Council for the year ended 31 December 2024, are in agreement with the books of account and have been prepared in accordance with the accounting requirements of the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The AFS is subject to external audit, by an auditor of the Local Government Audit Service, whose purpose is to form an independent opinion of the accounts and state whether the annual financial statement presents fairly the financial position of the local authority and of its income and expenditure for the period in question, and whether the transactions of the audited body conform with the statutory or other authorisation under which they purport to have been carried out.

The AFS reports on the day-to-day activity of Louth County Council in the form of the Statement of Comprehensive Income & Expenditure, summarised by Division. The Statement of Financial Position outlines Louth County Council's overall financial position as of the 31st of December 2024.

The Statement of Comprehensive Income represents expenditure and income on the day-to-day running of Louth County Council.

### The key sources of income for Louth County Council are as follows:

	2024	2023
	€	€
Goods & Services	€33,467,957	€33,603,890
Grants & Subsidies	€98,822,146	€76,451,127
Other Contributions	€878,527	€852,904
Rates	€34,754,545	€34,331,121
Local Property Tax	€11,366,197	€9,866,199

### Activity on the Income and Expenditure account for 2024 is as follows:

In 2024, we had additional expenditure in the refurbishment of Long-term Voids (€0.6m), insurance works on social housing (€0.9m), planned maintenance (€0.5m) in our housing stock, additional costs in relation to Homeless (€3.9m) and Croi Conaithne Grants of (€1.1m) all of which were funded by the Department and our own funding. We also had additional expenditure in regional and local road maintenance and improvements (€3.1m) most of which was grant funded. We had expenditure of €12.1m for the Increase cost of business and PowerUp grants, both funded by DETE. We also had increased pension & gratuity costs of (€0.9m). The Department gave an additional payroll grant (€1.5m) towards the increase in payroll and pension costs in 2024 and additional €1.5m funding under the LPT following a review of Local Authority Funding.

# Statement of Internal Financial Control (SIFC)

	2024	2023
	€	€
Income	€179,289,372	€155,105,242
Expenditure	€174,064,323	€147,827,475
Net Transfers to Capital	€5,046,234	€7,080,846
Exceptional Item	€NIL	€NIL
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	€178,816	€196,921
Prior Year Adjustment	€NIL	€NIL
Opening Revenue Reserve	€4,159,761	€3,962,840
Closing Revenue Reserve	€4,338,577	€4,159,761

Total Revenue Expenditure (including transfers to Capital) for 2024 was €181.1 million and Total Revenue Income (including transfers from Capital) was €181.3 million given us an overall surplus of €178.8k, which is 0.10% of expenditure. This added to our carried forward Reserve of €4,159,761 leaves us with a General Reserve of €4,338,577.

The Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) represents the total financial activity of the council for the year together with comparative year figures as appropriate.

- The statement includes assets and liabilities as follows:
- Assets both recently constructed/purchased and historical assets
- Work in progress and preliminary schemes- mainly roads and housing
- Long Term Debtors – housing loans
- Current Assets- including Stock, Debtors, Cash at bank
- Current and long-term liabilities- mortgage and non-mortgage loan borrowings
- Various Reserves/Balances

**The Net Assets of Louth County Council, at the end of 2024 total €2,338m and are as follows:**

	2024	2023
	€	€
Fixed Assets	€2,273,850,206	€2,196,258,039
Works in Progress	€124,710,284	€77,627,687
Long Term Debtors	€185,631,651	€174,198,075
Current Assets	€163,288,719	€150,821,780
Current Liabilities	€47,181,334	€50,387,004
Net Current Assets / (Liabilities)	€116,107,385	€100,434,775
Creditors (Amounts greater than 1 year)	€244,458,525	€232,078,948
Net Assets/(Liabilities)	€2,455,841,000	€2,316,439,628

# Statement of Internal Financial Control (SIFC)

A Statement of Funds Flow was introduced as part of AFS 2011. While the guidance of International Accounting Standard 7 Statement of Cash Flows has been followed, the business of local authorities is substantially different to most private sector organisations and therefore some minor changes to the format have been agreed to ensure the data displayed is meaningful and useful within the local government sector.

## SYSTEM OF INTERNAL FINANCIAL CONTROLS

As Chief Executive of Louth County Council, I acknowledge my responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated by Louth County Council. This responsibility is exercised in the context of the resources available to Louth County Council. Also, any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner. Maintaining the system of internal financial controls is a continuous process and the system and its effectiveness are kept under ongoing review.

## FINANCIAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

As Chief Executive of Louth County Council, I confirm that a financial control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability.
- Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned.
- Formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action.
- There is an Audit Committee which as part of its work programme regularly review the internal financial control system.
- Procedures for all key business processes have been documented.
- We are currently putting systems in place to safeguard the assets.

## ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS AND MANAGEMENT REPORTING

As Chief Executive of Louth County Council, I confirm that a framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability and, in particular, that:

- procedures for key business processes have been documented.
- there are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems.
- there are systems being put in place to safeguard the assets of the local authority and
- there are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines in operation.

## PROCUREMENT COMPLIANCE

Louth County Council ensures that there is an appropriate and ongoing focus on good practice in tendering and purchasing and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant procurement guidelines.

## INTERNAL AUDIT AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

As Chief Executive, I can confirm that Louth County Council has an internal audit function with appropriately trained personnel, which operates in accordance with a written charter. Its work is informed by analysis of the financial risks to which Louth County Council is exposed and its annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. I am satisfied that there are procedures in place to ensure that the reports of the internal audit function are followed up.

I can confirm that Louth County Council has an effective audit committee which carries out an annual effectiveness

# Statement of Internal Financial Control (SIFC)

review of their activities. I can also confirm that an Audit Committee is in place in accordance with the requirements of Section 122 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended).

The statutory functions of audit committees as set out in section 59 and 60 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 are as follows:

- to review financial and budgetary reporting practices and procedures within the local authority that has established it;
- to foster the development of best practice in the performance by the local authority of its internal audit function;
- to review any audited financial statement, auditor's report or auditor's special report in relation to the local authority and assess any actions taken within that authority by its chief executive in response to such a statement or report and to report to that authority on its findings;
- to assess and promote efficiency and value for money with respect to the local authority's performance of its functions; and
- to review systems that are operated by the local authority for the management of risks.

I recognise that the audit committee plays a crucial role in the governance framework of local authorities, particularly in the context of increased public sector accountability. They have an independent role in advising the Council on financial reporting processes, internal control, risk management and audit matters as part of the systematic review of the control environment and governance procedures of the local authority.

I acknowledge the Audit Committee's role in the risk management process and in the continuing review of the control environment and governance procedures in Louth County Council.

## RISK AND CONTROL FRAMEWORK

Louth County Council has implemented a risk management system which identifies and reports key risks and the management actions being taken to address and, to the extent possible, mitigate those risks.

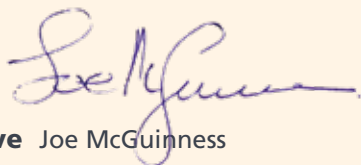
A corporate risk register is in place which identifies the key risks and evaluates and grades them according to their significance. The register is reviewed and updated by the Management Team on a regular basis. There is also a risk register in place for each service division and these are also reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

The outcome of these assessments is used to plan and allocate resources to ensure risks are managed to an acceptable level. The risk registers which detail the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks and responsibilities for the operation of controls are assigned to specific staff.

As Chief Executive, I confirm that key risks and related controls have been identified and processes have been put in place to monitor the operation of those key controls and report any identified deficiencies.

Going forward, the Statement of Internal Financial Control will be included in the draft Annual Report submitted to Council members each year and thereafter included in the published Annual Report prepared and adopted by the Council by 30th of June each year.

Signed by:



**Chief Executive** Joe McGuinness

Dated: 25<sup>th</sup> April 2025

# Louth County Council Corporate Plan 2019-2024 Progress Report

Title	2024 Update
Delivering the Rebuilding Ireland Strategy targets for County Louth	Louth County Council is currently exceeding the Government's "Housing for All" target and during 2024 a total of 438 new homes were delivered in the County. Homes were delivered via a range of measures including LA Direct Build, turnkey, Part V and partnership with AHBs.
Delivering the Homeless Action Plan	During 2024 67 homeless families were allocated a new tenancy and 97 families availed of assistance from the homeless team in accessing private rented accommodation. By year end 35 individuals were successfully placed in supported tenancies under the "Housing First" model. A second Homeless facility, located in Drogheda, with capacity for 18 families became operational during the year.
Implementing the Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP)	The Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP) 2019-2024 ended in Dec 2024 with the allocation of 90 units which greatly exceeded target (55). A new TAP was adopted by Council in Oct 2024. Two new Group Housing Schemes commenced construction in 2024.
Working with key stakeholders to achieve a mix of housing options	A Cost Rental scheme was delivered via a partnership arrangement with Louth County Council, Respond Housing Association, Housing Finance Agency and the Department. During 2024 a total of 349 new build units were delivered in partnership with the Approved Housing Body sector. In December, Irelands first houses constructed using concrete printing technology were delivered in Dundalk. This was a partnership arrangement between Louth County Council, LMETB and Developer.
Delivering compact growth in Dundalk & Drogheda, including town centre and multi-storey living	Since the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 came into effect on the 11th November 2021, 87.5% of all new residential units granted within the Built-Up Area of County Louth. This is in line with the growth strategy included in Policy Objective CS2 which seeks to achieve compact growth through the delivery of least 30% of all new homes in urban areas by developing infill, brownfield and regeneration sites and redeveloping underutilised land. Recent trends indicate higher densities and increased building heights with permissions granted for taller buildings at Lisdoon, Dundalk (2-5 storey), and Ballymakenny Road, Gravel Walk (3 storey) Drogheda.
Prioritising the role of housing in placemaking	The role of housing in placemaking remains a priority and is achieved through compliance with Policy Objective HOU 17 of the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2-27, as varied which seeks to promote and facilitate sustainable development of a high-quality built environment.

## DROGHEDA & DUNDALK

Title	2024 Update
Delivering new local area plans (LAP) for Drogheda & Dundalk	The Dundalk Local Area Plan was adopted on the 6th March 2025 and came into effect on the Thursday 17th April 2025.  The preparation of the Drogheda Joint Local Area Plan in partnership with Meath County Council is ongoing and an Issues Paper was carried out in Q1 2024 and a Joint Report on submissions received is being prepared by Louth and Meath County Councils.
Delivering the key objectives for Louth in Ireland 2040 and the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy	Dundalk and Drogheda are designated Regional Growth Centres as per the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES).  Population figures from Census 2022 have revealed that that 57% of Louth's population reside in the two Regional Growth Centres, Dundalk and Drogheda.  Both Dundalk & Drogheda are on target to reach a population target of 50,000 on or before 2031 which is in line with targets within the RSES which is informed by Ireland 2040.
Delivering strong population growth with compact multi-storey development within town footprints	Census 2022 data indicate a population increase in Louth of 10,819 person (8.4%) between 2016-2022. Population figures for the Regional Growth Centres of Dundalk & Drogheda and the Self-Sustaining Towns of Ardee and Dunleer have also shown an increase in the same period.  Since the adoption of the LCDP 2021-2027 as varied, 87.5% of all residential completions have taken place within the built-up area of County Louth.

# Louth County Council Corporate Plan 2019-2024 Progress Report (continued)

Progressing urban regeneration projects, such as Westgate Vision, Drogheda; Long Walk, Dundalk

There are currently three projects funded under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund. The West Gate Vision Plan has been granted planning approval from An Bord Pleanála. An Urban Framework Plan for the Long Walk is to be prepared. Phase 1 of the St. Nicholas Quarter project focuses on the rejuvenation of the streetscape. Works commenced on site in Q3 2024 and are nearing completion May 2025. Phase 2 of the St. Nicholas Quarter project will involve the preparation of a design concept for the redevelopment of the backlands area.

Enhancing Recreation, Cultural and Sports Facilities

A Night-time Economy Officer has been employed alongside the recruitment of a Tourism Officer. The Council recently unveiled their new tourism strategy and website for the County, with updated logo and branding. The strategy aims to promote key tourist assets within the County, which in turn will deliver widespread benefits. Droichead Arts Centre and An Tain in Dundalk have seen ongoing support and investment from the council as have smaller groups and facilities through our Arts Grant scheme. Upkeep and improvement works have been carried out to the Tholsel and Millmount.

The VarCITIES pilot project opened in Dundalk Library in June 2024, which includes an outdoor learning pod, outdoor urban green learning space and sensory garden, and sensor-equipped bike-stations. Continued investment into initiatives and festivals such as Lú Festival of Light and Sea Food Louth enhance the image of Louth as a place to visit. The Dundalk Leisure Centre Changing Village has been redeveloped, which encompasses accessible facilities. Following applications to Central Government in 2024, funding of €14,392.23 was allocated to Carlingford Library for significant repairs to its external appearance. Funding was also awarded via the Built Heritage Investment Scheme of €255,263, and via the Historic Thatched Buildings scheme of €14,392, all of which will contribute to the conservation and preservation of the Counties built heritage assets

Maintaining strong levels of job growth in Drogheda & Dundalk

The level of employment generating development has been strong with various employment related permissions granted in Drogheda and Dundalk.

Since the adoption of the LCDP (as varied), there has been 5730sq.m of office, 30,428sq.m of industrial, 10,945 sq. m of retail and 35,455sq.m of commercial space granted in County Louth, this has mainly been concentrated in the two Regional Growth Centre of Drogheda and Dundalk.

The tender for the appointment of a contractor is being assessed to progress the Drogheda Digital Innovation Hub.

Developing our towns as great places to Live, Work and Play

The National Transport Authority (NTA) awarded the Council a budget allocation of €6,300,000 million to advance 28 Active Travel Project, these are at various stages. It is anticipated that upon completion, the projects will improve walking and cycling facilities for all and improve well-being and quality of life.

Part 8 applications have been granted in Drogheda & Dundalk for Active Travel projects which will see the installation of high-quality segregated pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to improve safety and promote active travel to and from the town centres in both Drogheda & Dundalk.

AA Screening and Part 8 reports are being compiled with respect to the upgrade of St Dominic's Park in Drogheda. And there is an ongoing review of play facilities in the County requiring refurbishment.

# Louth County Council Corporate Plan 2019-2024 Progress Report (continued)

## KEY INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECTS

Title	2024 Update
Drogheda Civic Centre	Works reached substantial completion and opened to the public on the 2nd of Sept.
Port Access Road	Phase 1 opened to traffic in early 2024 and reached substantial completion in March 2024. Agreement has been reached with a Private Developer on the delivery of Phase 2 for Aston Village to the Termonfeckin Rd, with works due to commence in 2025.
Ardee bypass	9th April High Court hearing into the Judicial review took place with a judgement being made in May 2024.  This Judgement was subsequent appealed by the applicants which was refused in November 2024. In December 2024 the Applicant lodged an application for leave to the Supreme Court.
Narrow Water Bridge	The Tender was Awarded to BAM Civil Limited in April 2024. Construction on Site commenced on the 29th of April. An official launch event of the construction period for the scheme was held on the 4th of August.  Site Clearance and commencement of approached roads and roundabouts commenced in June 2024.  Construction on the abutment both on the northern and southern sections of the project commenced in August 2024. Works will continue till Oct 2027 opening date.
Clanbrassil Street & St. Nicholas Quarter	Saint Nicholas Quarter phase 1 public realm scheme commenced on the ground in 2024 under a 15-month contract and will be completed in 2025.
Westgate Vision	The Westgate planning application was lodged with An Bord Pleanala in 2023 and seeks approval for significant regeneration of the Westgate area of Drogheda through a public realm scheme. The proposed improvements to the public realm will encompass several streets including Georges Street to Dominick Street and from Fair Street to Father Connolly Way.
Ardee 2040	Ardee 2040 is funded under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund. It is intended to seek planning approval from An Bord Pleanala in 2025. This large-scale project seeks improvements to the streetscape and amenity in Ardee with a focus on the key areas of Main Street, the Old Railway Lands and the proposed new amenity lands to the east of the town centre.

## KEY PLANS & STRATEGY

Title	2024 Update
County Development Plan	A variation of the Louth County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 (Variation No. 2) was carried out which updated the County Development Plan to take account of the Guidelines 'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities'.  Variation No.3 of the County Development Plan is currently being prepared to take account of changes arising from the Dundalk Local Area Plan 2025-2031 which was adopted in March 2025. Proposed Variation No. 3 is expected to be published in Q2/Q3 of 2025.  The review of the Louth County Development Plan is expected to be begin in Q3 of 2025.
Local Area Plans (LAP). Dundalk. Drogheda. Ardee	The Dundalk Local Area Plan was adopted on the 6th March 2025 and came into effect on the Thursday 17th April 2025.  The preparation of the Drogheda Joint Local Area Plan in partnership with Meath County Council is ongoing and progressing proactively following the public consultation on the Issues Paper which closed on the 27th March 2024.  The Local Area Plan for Ardee has not yet commenced.

# Louth County Council Corporate Plan 2019-2024 Progress Report (continued)

## QUALITY OF LIFE

Title	2024 Update
That all of our citizens avail and enjoy our Arts, Culture & Library Services	<p><b>Louth Library Service:</b> The trajectory for Louth Library Service throughout 2024 was strategically aligned to the National Public Library Strategy, The Library is the Place, 2023-2027 and its three main themes of People, Places &amp; Connections.</p> <p>The former Bank of Ireland building on main St Dunleer was transformed into a new library opening its doors to the public on December 4th 2024. The building has been refurbished to include a flexible, open plan, welcoming space with adult and children's reading areas, Wi-Fi and PC access. The new premises facilitates increased community engagement through opportunities for school visits, story time, talks, book clubs, and the many other services offered by Louth Library Service. The refurbishment of the first floor, which has lift access, will allow groups to meet in one of the two flexible community rooms and will provide more opportunities for library events.</p> <p>Louth Library Service continued to promote library strategic initiatives including Right to Read and Healthy Ireland at Your Library, with a full calendar of ancillary events to promote literacy and reader development, as well as health and wellbeing for all members of the community.</p> <p>The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys, announced a major investment of over €25 million towards our public library service on 24 April 2024. Among the funded projects is €3 million toward a new library on the site of the old Dominican Church in Drogheda. Louth County Council was also successful in securing funding toward a new mobile library vehicle.</p> <p>Further funding was announced under Dormant Accounts Funding Scheme to support people with disabilities and other marginalised groups. The purchase of sensory hardware, software and ergonomic furniture builds on previous initiatives and enhance the commitment of Louth Library Service to improve our spaces and to support adults and children with reading difficulties, visual impairments, and mobility issues.</p> <p><b>Louth County Archives Service:</b> The County Archives continuously strives to manage the identification, preservation and availability of that memory through the public and private archive collections held in its repository.</p> <p>The identification and preservation of archives is an imperative for our society and the Archivist continued to process archive collections, manage the transfer of new archives and monitor the environmental conditions in which they are housed.</p> <p>Individuals and organisations are encouraged to deposit their collections in the County Archives so that they too will form part of our collective memory.</p> <p>The Co Archivist is a member of the Local Government Management Agency led Records Management Working Group and continued to work on the revision of the National Retention Policy for local authority records during 2024.</p> <p>The County Archives, along-with the Place-making department, assisted with the creation of a website for a free, searchable database of burials for St Patrick's Cemetery, Dundalk. The cemetery opened in 1895 and the database contains a transcription of data from the burial records held in the County Archives. The transcription was produced by a local historian, Jim Kerley of the Old Dundalk Society, with the help of volunteers, while the Council's GIS Officer developed the searchable database.</p> <p><b>County Museum Dundalk:</b> The purpose of the County Museum, Dundalk is to inspire a familiarity with the past through the collection, conservation and communication of the cultural heritage of County Louth and its wider community.</p> <p>2024 marked the 30th Anniversary of the Co. Museum and afforded an opportunity for a series of lectures and events highlighting the many local and national changes that have occurred since opening its doors in 1994. Indeed, a central feature of the celebratory events was the promotion of the importance and nature of legacy particularly as defined through people's personal collections, a theme to which the Museum returned through the year.</p>

# Louth County Council Corporate Plan 2019-2024 Progress Report (continued)

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That all of our citizens avail and enjoy our Arts, Culture & Library Services

**Louth Arts:**

The Arts Service for County Louth continues to support a wide range of programmes and artist residencies in Creative Spark, An Táin Arts Centre and Droichead Arts Centre. Additional activities included our successful Music in Healthcare programme for Bealtaine and an extensive Culture Night programme.

We supported the development of a play with the local Outcomers group and supported 3 independent films being produced by Louth artists and filmed on location in Louth. We also supported festivals such as Feile na Tana, Sean Corcoran Series, Drogheda Traditional Music Weekend and Drogheda Arts Festival.

**Grants & Awards:**

In 2024, the arts service continued to make available a range of bursaries and awards to emerging and established artists across the county for a range of projects and development programmes. We supported a total of 38 awards across all of our schemes.

**Creative Ireland:**

In 2024 the Culture and Creativity Team supported grant funding to 14 local community groups. The team also led on 5 internal projects ranging from an Age Friendly project, a project through our Healthy Ireland partners, projects in our libraries, including supporting Louth Science Festival and an impactful project in a local housing estate highlighting the importance of local community leaders. The Louth Culture and Creativity team is made up of representatives from several sectors of the Local Authority and we continue to use Creative Ireland to enhance the work that is done in each sector through initiatives working directly with community groups to address areas of importance. We also continue to deliver on annual initiatives such as our Cruinniú na nÓg programme.

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# Performance Indicators

Topic	Indicator	Value	Comment
<b>Housing: H1, H2 &amp; H4</b> <b>Approved</b>	Number of Council & Committee Meetings	86	
	A. Number of dwellings in the ownership of the local authority at 01/01/2024	4,254	
	B. Number of dwellings added to the local authority owned stock during 2024 (whether constructed or acquired)	145	
	C. Number of local authority owned dwellings sold in 2024	16	
	D. Number of local authority owned dwellings demolished in 2024	0	
	E. Number of dwellings in the ownership of the local authority at 31/12/2024	4,383	
	F. Number of local authority owned dwellings planned for demolition under a DHLGH approved scheme at 31/12/2024	0	
	A. The percentage of the total number of local authority owned dwellings that were vacant on 31/12/2024	2.12%	
	The number of dwellings within their overall stock that were not tenanted on 31/12/2024	93	
	A. Expenditure during 2024 on the maintenance of local authority housing compiled from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024, divided by the no. of dwellings in the local authority stock at 31/12/2024, i.e. the H1E less H1F indicator figure	€2,216.73	
	Expenditure on maintenance of local authority stock compiled from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024, including planned maintenance and expenditure that qualified for grants, such as Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) grants for energy efficient retro-fitting works but excluding expenditure on vacant properties and expenditure under approved major refurbishment schemes (i.e. approved Regeneration or under the Remedial Works Schemes).	€9,715,916	included the EERP spend is included. This funding is provided from DHLGH and this year we also had an increase in Planned Maintenance budgets.
	PI 2023: H1E. Number of Dwellings In Ownership at 31/12/2023	4254	
	Cross-Check H1A with PI 2023 H1E	H1A Matches 2023 H1E	

# Performance Indicators (continued)

Topic	Indicator	Value	Comment
<b>Housing: H1, H2 &amp; H4</b> Approved	Number of Council & Committee Meetings	86	
	A. Number of dwellings in the ownership of the local authority at 01/01/2024	4,254	
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	PI 2023: H1E. Number of Dwellings In Ownership at 31/12/2023	4254	
	Cross-Check H1A with PI 2023 H1E	H1A Matches 2023 H1E	
	<b>Housing: H3 &amp; H5</b> Approved	A. The time taken from the date of vacation of a dwelling to the date in 2024 when the dwelling is re-tenanted, averaged across all dwellings re-let during 2024	112.98 wk
B. The cost expended on getting the dwellings re-tenanted in 2024, averaged across all dwellings re-let in 2024		€22,115.37	
The number of dwellings that were re-tenanted on any date in 2024 (but excluding all those that had been vacant due to an estate-wide refurbishment scheme)		89	Fewer number of existing stock re-tenanted in Dundalk & County areas in 2024
The number of weeks from the date of vacation to the date the dwelling is re-tenanted		10,055 wk	A number of long term voids were brought back into stock in 2024 including those from Drogheda feud and some very old stock for which we had no previous funding
Total expenditure on works necessary to enable re-letting of the dwellings		€1,968,268	This was the budget allocated in 2024. The voids funding from the Department was lower than previous years
A. Total number of registered tenancies in the LA area at 31 December 2024		7,522	
B. Number of rented dwellings inspected in 2024		1,718	
C. Percentage of inspected dwellings in 2024 not compliant with the Standards Regulations		99.94%	
D. Number of dwellings deemed compliant in 2024 (including those originally deemed non-compliant)		90	
E. The number of inspections (including reinspections) undertaken by the local authority in 2024		1,812	

# Performance Indicators (continued)

<b>Housing: H6</b> Approved	A. Number of adult individuals in emergency accommodation that are long-term (i.e. 6 months or more within the previous year) homeless as a percentage of the total number of homeless adult individuals in emergency accommodation at the end of 2024	39.23%	increase in figures in 2024 was due to increase in iPass clients leaving Direct Provision with no secure accommodation, Family reunification and prison releases
	The number of adult individuals classified as homeless and in emergency accommodation on the night of 31 December 2024 as recorded on the PASS system	209	
	The number out of those individuals who, on 31/12/2024, had been in emergency accommodation for 6 months continuously, or for 6 months cumulatively within the previous 12 months	82	
<b>Housing: H7</b> Approved	A. (1) Total number of houses retrofitted between 01/01/2024 and 31/12/2024 under the Social Housing Retrofit Programme	146	
	A. (2) Number of houses that achieved a BER rating of B2 or above between 01/01/2024 and 31/12/2024 under the Social Housing Retrofit Programme	145	
	A. (3) Number of heat pumps installed in those houses between 01/01/2024 and 31/12/2024 under the Social Housing Retrofit Programme	145	
	B. Total annual energy savings in MWh from houses retrofitted between 01/01/2024 and 31/12/2024 under the Social Housing Retrofit Programme	2034.3 MWh	
	C. Total carbon emission reduction tCo2 from houses retrofitted between 01/01/2024 and 31/12/2024 under the Social Housing Retrofit Programme	522.3	
<b>Roads: R1, R2 &amp; R4</b> Approved	A. (a) The percentage of Regional roads that received a PSCI rating in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2024		
	A. (b) The percentage of Local Primary roads that received a PSCI rating in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2024	81.17%	
	A. (c) The percentage of Local Secondary roads that received a PSCI rating in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2024	76.41%	
	A. (d) The percentage of Local Tertiary roads that received a PSCI rating in the 60 month period prior to 31/12/2024	44.46%	
	B. (a.1) The percentage length of Regional roads that received a PSCI rating of 1-4 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2024		
	B. (a.2) The percentage length of Regional roads that received a PSCI rating of 5-6 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2024		
	B. (a.3) The percentage length of Regional roads that received a PSCI rating of 7-8 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2024		
	B. (a.4) The percentage length of Regional roads that received a PSCI rating of 9-10 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2024		
	B. (b.1) The percentage length of Local Primary roads that received a PSCI rating of 1-4 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2024	1.36%	
	B. (b.2) The percentage length of Local Primary roads that received a PSCI rating of 5-6 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2024	10.39%	
	B. (b.3) The percentage length of Local Primary roads that received a PSCI rating of 7-8 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2024	52.70%	
	B. (b.4) The percentage length of Local Primary roads that received a PSCI rating of 9-10 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2024	16.71%	
	B. (c.1) The percentage length of Local Secondary roads that received a PSCI rating of 1-4 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2024	4.26%	
	B. (c.2) The percentage length of Local Secondary roads that received a PSCI rating of 5-6 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2024	15.74%	
	B. (c.3) The percentage length of Local Secondary roads that received a PSCI rating of 7-8 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2024	44.34%	
	B. (c.4) The percentage length of Local Secondary roads that received a PSCI rating of 9-10 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2024	12.07%	

# Performance Indicators (continued)

	B. (d.1) The percentage length of Local Tertiary roads that received a PSCI rating of 1-4 in the 60 month period prior to 31/12/2024	3.67%
	B. (d.2) The percentage length of Local Tertiary roads that received a PSCI rating of 5-6 in the 60 month period prior to 31/12/2024	6.69%
	B. (d.3) The percentage length of Local Tertiary roads that received a PSCI rating of 7-8 in the 60 month period prior to 31/12/2024	20.18%
	B. (d.4) The percentage length of Local Tertiary roads that received a PSCI rating of 9-10 in the 60 month period prior to 31/12/2024	13.93%
	A.1 Kilometres of regional road strengthened during 2024	4.5 km
	A.2 The amount expended on regional roads strengthening work during 2024	€2,925,234.96
	A.3 The average unit cost of regional road strengthening works per square metre (€/m <sup>2</sup> )	€80.60
	B.1 Kilometres of regional road resealed during 2024	13.4 km
	B.2 The amount expended on regional road resealing work during 2024	€540,567.26
	B.3 The average unit cost of regional road resealing works per square metre (€/m <sup>2</sup> )	€5.91
	C.1 Kilometres of local road strengthened during 2024	8.5 km
	C2. The amount expended on local road strengthening work during 2024	€2,257,944.76
	C.3 The average unit cost of local road strengthening works per square metre (€/m <sup>2</sup> )	€42.57
	D.1 Kilometres of local road resealed during 2024	54.5 km
	D.2 The amount expended on local road resealing work during 2024	€2,897,134.47
	D.3 The average unit cost of local road resealing works per square metre (€/m <sup>2</sup> )	€9.80
	A. Total number of T2, T2 <sup>1</sup> , T3, T4s issued by the local authority between 01/01/2024 and 31/12/2024	755
	B. Total number of T5 notifications received from licence holders between 01/01/2024 and 31/12/2024	870
	C. Percentage of licences that have been reviewed by the local authority prior to entering the Guarantee Period	35.00%
	D. Percentage of licences that have been subject of an inspection prior to entering the Guarantee Period	4.00%
<b>Motor Tax: R3</b> <b>Approved</b>	A. The percentage of motor tax transactions which were dealt with online (i.e. transaction is processed and the tax disc is issued) in 2024	82.94%
<b>Water: W1 &amp; W2</b> <b>Approved</b>	Percentage of drinking water in private schemes in compliance with statutory requirements	
	The number of registered schemes monitored by each local authority as a percentage of total schemes registered	100%
	How many local authority registered schemes were monitored in 2024	16
	Total number of registered schemes in 2024	16
<b>Waste: E1</b> <b>In Progress</b>	A. The number of households which availed of a 3-bin service offered by a licensed operator at 31/12/2024	
	B. The percentage of households within the local authority that the number at A represents	

# Performance Indicators (continued)

<b>Environmental Pollution: E2</b> Approved	A. Total number of pollution cases in respect of which a complaint was made during 2024	1,721	
	A. Number of pollution cases closed from 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024	1,637	
	A. Total number of pollution cases on hands at 31/12/2024	221	It should be noted that the closing figure should be 113 as at the end of 2024. The closing figure was incorrect for year ending 2022 and therefore also for 2023
	The opening number of pollution cases carried forward from the year end 2023	137	
	(PI 2023 Return) Total number of pollution cases on hand at 31/12/2023	137	
	Cross-check opening no. cases carried forward from 2023 with PI 2023 cases on hand at EOY	Opening Cases matches the 2023 no. of cases on hand	
<b>Litter Pollution: E3</b> In Progress	A1. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2024 was unpolluted or litter free		
	A2. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2024 was slightly polluted		
	A3. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2024 was moderately polluted		
	A4. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2024 was significantly polluted		
	A5. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2024 was grossly polluted		
<b>Green Flag Status: E4</b> Approved	A. The percentage of schools that have been awarded/renewed green flag status in the two years to 31 December 2024	35.87%	
	Schools which attained a Green Flag for the first time in 2024	0	
	Schools which renewed their Green Flag in 2024	19	
	Schools which held a Green Flag from 2023 and therefore do not require renewal until 2025	14	
<b>Energy Efficiency: E5</b> In Progress	A. The cumulative percentage of energy savings achieved by 31/12/2024 relative to baseline year (2009)		
<b>Public Lighting: E6</b> Approved	A. Total annual consumption of the public lighting system	5,284.88 MWh	
	B. Average wattage of each public light	90.57 W	
	C. Percentage of the total system that LED lights represent	62.08%	
	Number of LED lights in the public lighting system	8,960	
	Number of non-LED lights in the public lighting system	5,472	
<b>Climate Change: E7</b> Approved	1 a) Does the local authority have a designated (FTE) Climate Action Coordinator?	Yes	
	1 b) Does the local authority have a designated (FTE) Climate Action Officer?	Yes	
	2. Does the local authority have a climate action team?	Yes	
<b>Planning: P1</b> Approved	A. Buildings inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to the local authority	4.02%	
	Total number of new buildings notified to the local authority i.e. buildings where a valid Commencement Notice was served in the period 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024 by a builder or developer on the local authority	2,587	
	Number of new buildings notified to the local authority in 2024 that were the subject of at least one on-site inspection during 2024 undertaken by the local authority	104	

# Performance Indicators (continued)

<b>Planning: P2 &amp; P3</b> <b>Approved</b>	A. Number of local authority planning decisions which were the subject of an appeal to An Bord Pleanála that were determined by the Board on any date in 2024	71	
	B. Percentage of the determinations at A which confirmed (either with or without variation of the plan) the decision made by the local authority	83.10%	
	Number of determinations confirming the local authority's decision (either with or without variation)	59	
	A. Total number of planning cases referred to or initiated by the local authority in the period 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024 that were investigated	256	
	B. Total number of investigated cases that were closed during 2024	237	
	C. Percentage of the cases at B that were dismissed as trivial, minor or without foundation or were closed because statute barred or an exempted development	0%	
	D. Percentage of the cases at B that were resolved to the local authority's satisfaction through negotiations	39.24%	
	E. Percentage of the cases at B that were closed due to enforcement proceedings	60.76%	
	F. Total number of planning cases being investigated as at 31/12/2024	341	
	Number of cases at B that were dismissed as trivial, minor or without foundation or were closed because statute barred or an exempted development	0	
	Number of cases at B that were resolved to the local authority's satisfaction through negotiations	93	
	Number of cases at B that were closed due to enforcement proceedings	144	
	<b>Planning: P4 &amp; P5</b> <b>Approved</b>	A. The 2024 Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme D data divided by the population of the local authority area per the 2022 Census	€33.50
AFS Programme D data consisting of D01 - Forward Planning, D02 - Development Management, D03 - Enforcement (inclusive of the relevant Programme D proportion of the central management charge) for 2024		€4,680,274	
A. The percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2024 that were decided (granted or refused) within two months of their receipt		69.05%	
B. The percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2024 that were decided (granted or refused) within an extended period agreed with the applicant		22.62%	
The total number of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2024 that were not withdrawn by the applicant		84	Section Comment - The Development levy waiver scheme increased the number of 7 Day Notice (7DN) applications received in 2024 to 115, up by 65 (57%) on 2023, as 7DN applications are not included in this calculation, it does not accurately represent the volume of applications processed.
The number of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2024 that were decided (granted or refused) within two months of the date of receipt of the application		58	

# Performance Indicators (continued)

	The number of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2024 that were decided (granted or refused) within an agreed extended time period	19	Section Comment - The Development levy waiver scheme increased the number of 7 Day Notice (7DN) applications received in 2024 to 115, up by 65 (57%) on 2023, as 7DN applications are not included in this calculation, it does not accurately represent the volume of applications processed.
<b>Fire Service: F1</b> <b>Approved</b>	A. The Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme E expenditure data for 2024 divided by the population of the local authority area per the 2022 Census figures for the population served by the fire authority as per the Risk Based Approach Phase One reports	€86.21	
	AFS Programme E expenditure data consisting of E11 - Operation of Fire Service and E12 - Fire Prevention for 2024	€12,044,325	The population data does not include the census data for East Meath population area covered by Louth. The East Meath figure was included prior to the 2022 census figures.
<b>Fire Service: F2 &amp; F3</b> <b>Approved</b>	A. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Full-Time Stations in respect of fire	1.15 min	
	B. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Part-Time Stations (retained fire service) in respect of fire	4.24 min	
	C. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Full-Time Stations in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents	1.24 min	
	D. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Part-Time Stations (retained fire service) in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents	4.46 min	
	A. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at scene is within 10 minutes	76.89%	
	B. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	20.0%	
	C. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	3.11%	
	D. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes	51.56%	
	E. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	43.06%	
	F. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	5.38%	
	Total number of call-outs in respect of fires from 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024	610	
	Number of these fire cases where first fire tender attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes	469	
	Number of these fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	122	
	Number of these fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	19	
	Total number of call-outs in respect of all other emergency incidents (i.e. not including fire) from 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024	353	
	Number of these non-fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes	182	
	Number of these non-fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	152	
	Number of these non-fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	19	

# Performance Indicators (continued)

<b>Library Service: L1</b> <b>Approved</b>	A. Number of visits to libraries per head of population for the local authority area per the 2022 Census	1.73
	B. Number of items issued to library borrowers in the year	310,030
	C. Library active members per head of population	0.16
	D. Number of registered library members in the year	16,867
	Number of visits to its libraries from 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024 per automatic counters if used	241,771
<b>Library Service: L2</b> <b>Approved</b>	A. The Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme F data for 2024 divided by the population of the local authority area per the 2022 Census	€27.95
	B. The annual per capita expenditure on collections over the period 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024	€1.28
	A. AFS Programme F data consisting of F02 - Operation of Library and Archival Service (inclusive of the relevant proportion of the central management charge for Programme F) for 2024	€3,904,257
	B. The annual expenditure on new stock acquired by the library in the year	€178,759.59
<b>Youth and Community: Y1 &amp; Y2</b> <b>Approved</b>	A. Percentage of local schools involved in the local Youth Council/ Comhairle na nÓg scheme	94.74%
	Total number of second level schools in the local authority area at 31/12/2024	19
	Number of second level schools in the local authority area from which representatives attended the local Comhairle na nÓg AGM held in 2024	18
	A. The number of organisations included in the County Register at 31/12/2024 and the proportion of those organisations that opted to be part of the Social Inclusion College within the PPN	24.56
	Total number of organisations included in the County Register (maintained in accordance with section 128 of the Local Government Act 2001) for the local authority area as at 31/12/2024	619
	Total number of those organisations that registered for the first time in 2024	86
	Number of organisations that opted to join the Social Inclusion Electoral College on whatever date they registered for the PPN	152
	A. The wholetime equivalent staffing number as at 31 December 2024	718.15
	A. Percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified leave in 2024	4.55%
	B. Percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through self-certified leave in 2024	0.11%
<b>Corporate: C1, C2, C4 &amp; C5</b> <b>Approved</b>	Total number of working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified leave in 2024	7,565.85 days
	Total number of working days lost to sickness absence through self-certified leave in 2024	881 days
	Number of unpaid working days lost to sickness absence included within the total of self-certified sick leave days in 2024	706.78 days
	Number of unpaid working days lost to sickness absence included within the total of medically certified sick leave days in 2024	141 days
	If any staff are on long-term sick leave (i.e. a continuous period of more than 4 weeks), include a text note of the number of staff on long-term sick leave	64 absences of 20 days or more in 2024
	A. All ICT expenditure in the period from 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024, divided by the WTE no.	€4,511.79
	Total ICT expenditure in 2024	€3,240,140.29
	A. All ICT expenditure calculated in C4 as a proportion of Revenue expenditure	1.86
	Total Revenue expenditure from 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024 before transfers to or from reserves	€174,064,323

# Performance Indicators (continued)

<b>Corporate: C3</b> <b>Approved</b>	A. The per capita total page views of the local authority's websites in 2024	8.67		
	B. The per capita total number of followers at end 2024 of the local authority's social media accounts (if any)	0.70		
	The cumulative total page views of all websites operated by the local authority for the period from 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024 obtained from a page tagging on-site web analytics service or equivalent	1,211,100		
	The total number of social media users who, at 31/12/2024, were following the local authority on any social media sites	97,328		
	The number of social media accounts operated by the local authority	41	There is an increase of 8 no social media sites on 2023. 2 no pages were created in 2024. 6 no pages were created in previous years and are included in 2024 for the first time	
	Indicate if there was a change to the cookie policies on the local authority sites and the date this came into effect			
<b>Finance: M1 to M4</b> <b>Approved</b>	A. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2020 in the Revenue Account from the Income & Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€1,007,413		
	B. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2021 in the Revenue Account from the Income & Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€2,370,230		
	C. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2022 in the Revenue Account from the Income & Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€3,962,840		
	D. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2023 in the Revenue Account from the Income & Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€4,159,761		
	E. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2024 in the Revenue Account from the Income & Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€4,338,577		
	F. Cumulative surplus or deficit at 31/12/2024 as a percentage of Total Income in 2024 from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	2.42%		
	G. Revenue expenditure per capita in 2024	€1,245.96		
	H. Revenue expenditure per capita in 2024 excluding significant out of county/shared service expenditure			
	The 2024 Total Income figure from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€179,289,372		
	The 2024 Total Expenditure figure from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€174,064,323		
	The 2024 Revenue expenditure excluding county/shared service expenditure for the service providers of HAP, MyPay, DRHE and Dublin Fire Services and is only applicable to Dublin City, Laois and Limerick			
	A. (a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2020	63.0%		
	A. (b) Collection level of Rent & Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2020	81.0%		
	A. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2020	85.0%		
	B. (a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2021	76.0%		
	B. (b) Collection level of Rent & Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2021	84.0%		
B. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2021	88.0%			
C. a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2022	83.0%			

# Performance Indicators (continued)

C. (b) Collection level of Rent & Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2022	84.0%	
C. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2022	86.0%	
D. (a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2023	87.0%	
D. (b) Collection level of Rent & Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2023	83.0%	
D. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2023	87.0%	
E. (a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2024	87%	
E. (b) Collection level of Rent & Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2024	84%	
E. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2024	87%	
E. (d) Collection level of HAP SSC for 2024		
A. Per capita total cost of settled claims for 2024	€19.78	
IPB Insurance: Number of notified claims for 2024	257	
IPB Insurance: Number of settled claims for 2024	206	
IPB Insurance: Total cost of settled claims for 2024	€2,762,926.92	
Total cost of claims settled under excess for 2024	€0	LCC do not pay out on claims, all claims are referred to IPB
Self-insured: Number of notified claims for 2024	0	LCC do not pay out on claims, all claims are referred to IPB
Self-insured: Number of settled claims for 2024	0	LCC do not pay out on claims, all claims are referred to IPB
Self-insured: Total cost of settled claims for 2024	€0	LCC do not pay out on claims, all claims are referred to IPB
A. Overall central management charge as a percentage of total expenditure on revenue account	12.60%	
B. Total payroll costs as a percentage of revenue expenditure	31.72%	
Overall central management charge from the Local Authority FMS and defined in the Annual Budget	€21,935,626	
Total payroll costs from Appendix 1 of the AFS for 2024 (including Salaries, Wages and Pensions)	€55,208,104	

# Performance Indicators (continued)

<b>Economic Development: J1 to J5</b> <b>Approved</b>	A. The number of jobs created with assistance from the Local Enterprise Office during the period 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024 per 100,000 of population	17.90	
	The number of jobs created with assistance from the Local Enterprise Office during the period 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024	25.0	
	A. The number of trading online voucher applications approved by the Local Enterprise Office in 2024 per 100,000 of population	27.92	
	B. The number of trading online vouchers that were drawn down in 2024 per 100,000 of population	9.31	
	The number of trading online voucher applications approved by the Local Enterprise Office in 2024	39	
	The number of those trading online vouchers that were drawn down in 2024	13	
	A. The number of participants who received mentoring during the period 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024 per 100,000 of population	512.52	
	The number of participants who received mentoring during the period 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024	716	
	A. Does the local authority have a current tourism strategy?		The tourism strategy for Louth is due to be completed by the end of 2025
	B. Does the local authority have a designated Tourism Officer?	Yes	
	The spend on local economic development by the local authority in 2024 per head of population	€218.44	spend in J5 includes €7,293,364 in ICOB Grants and €4,828,000 in Power Up Grants.
	The spend on local economic development by the local authority in 2024	€30,517,013	

# Governance Statement 2024

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this governance statement is to provide relevant information on the governance structures and governance arrangements within the local authority including the Council, committees, senior management and related areas. It demonstrates our commitment to effective governance, recognises key legislative and good governance requirements and affirms the Council's compliance with the Local Government Code of Governance obligations.

## GOOD GOVERNANCE

Fundamentally, good governance in the local government sector and wider public sector is about delivering priorities, achieving objectives, behaving with integrity and acting in the public interest, in ways that are consistent with legal, regulatory and government policy obligations. Governance refers to the framework of rules, relationships, systems and processes by which the local authority is directed, controlled and held to account and whereby authority within an organisation is exercised and maintained. It encompasses authority, accountability, stewardship and leadership, direction and control.

## GOOD GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

**CORE PRINCIPLE 1** - Good governance means focusing on the purpose of the authority, on outcomes that deliver sustainable economic, community and wider societal benefits and on implementing a vision for the local authority.

**CORE PRINCIPLE 2** - Good governance means promoting and demonstrating public service values through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.

**CORE PRINCIPLE 3** - Good governance means members and officials working together to achieve a common purpose within a framework of clearly defined functions and roles.

**CORE PRINCIPLE 4** - Good governance means developing the organisational capacity and the leadership capability and competencies of members and officials to operate effectively and fulfil the purpose of the organization.

**CORE PRINCIPLE 5** - Good governance means taking well-informed and transparent decisions and managing risks and performance.

**CORE PRINCIPLE 6** - Good governance means engaging openly and comprehensively with local people, citizens and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

**CORE PRINCIPLE 7** - Good governance means actively contributing to the furtherance and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by delivering on the priorities and actions within the Climate Action Plan and the provisions of the Climate Act.

# Governance Statement 2024 (continued)

## OUR COMMITMENT TO GOOD GOVERNANCE

As the Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive of the Council, and on behalf of the elected members, management and staff we confirm that;

1. We recognise the governance principles as the fundamental bedrock and philosophy on how we operate as a governing body and as an executive.
2. We recognise the Local Government Code of Governance as the centrepiece of the governance framework for local authorities.
3. The Statement of Internal Financial Control is submitted by the Chief Executive to the Elected Members and to the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee reviews the SIFC and provides an assurance on an annual basis to the Elected Members. Mechanisms are available to the Audit Committee to notify the Elected Members of any issues that arise outside of the normal annual reporting.
4. Compliance with legal and regulatory obligations are acknowledged and adhered to.
5. There is clarity of roles and responsibilities based on the reserved and executive functions and based on committee terms of reference.
6. Codes of Conduct and ethics declarations for members and employees are in place.
7. Procedures are in place for the making of protected disclosures in accordance with section 21(1) of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 and confirmation that the annual report required under section 22(1) of the Act has been published.
8. The Council and Committees review their own performance on a periodic basis.
9. We have instituted appropriate governance oversight arrangements in respect of subsidiary, associated and related companies.
10. As part of our commitment to effective oversight and accountability, we have developed and continue to enhance our overall assurance framework utilising external and internal assurance sources to ensure good performance as part of our governance culture.



Date: 30th June 2025

Kevin Callan

Cathaoirleach



Date: 30th June 2025

Joe McGuinness

Temp. Chief Executive

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024



Comhairle Contae **Lú**  
**Louth** County Council