



Comhairle Contae Lú
Louth County Council

Cruinniú Míósúil Chomhairle Contae Lú Louth County Council Monthly Meeting

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Louth County Council hosted in the Council Chamber of Co. Hall, Dundalk on Monday, 18th May 2026, at 10:00a.m.

In Attendance:

Presiding: Councillor Seán Kelly – Cathaoirleach

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

Apologies: Councillors: Ejiro O'Hare Stratton,

Officials: David Conway, Chief Executive
Joanna Kelly, Acting Director of Services
Bernadette Woods, Director of Finance
David Hanratty, Acting Director of Services
David Jones, Director of Services
Ger Murphy, Director of Services
Thomas McEvoy, Director of Services
Sinéad Dooley, Meetings Administrator
Susan Deery, Administrative Officer
Paula Keenan, A/Senior Executive Officer
Gavin McLaughlin, Communications Officer
Olivia McCormack, Senior Executive Officer
Turlough King, A/Senior Planner
Amanda Brannigan, County Librarian
Helen Divilly, Head of Information Systems
Aine Roddy, Assistant Communications Officer
John O'Hagan, Senior Engineer
Clare O'Hagan, Acting Tourism Officer
Niall Gallagher, Administrative Officer

Minute No. 101/26

Minutes of Special Meeting on the County Development Plan held on 27th March 2026

The Minutes were:-

Proposed by: Cllr. Maeve Yore
Seconded by: Cllr. Michelle Hall
And Approved.

Minute No. 102/26

Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 20th April 2026

The Minutes were:-

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

Minute No. 103/26

Matters Arising

- Cllr. Yore sought an update on the request for Irish Rail to meet with Members to discuss future development requirements and a range of issues relating to railway stations across the County. It was agreed that the Executive would issue further correspondence to Irish Rail in this regard.
- Cllr. McGeough queried whether any response had been received to the request for the Fisheries Board and the OPW to meet with Members to discuss matters pertaining to rivers within the County. The Executive confirmed that no response had been received to date.
- In reference to Minute No. 69/26, concerning a Notice of Motion on Vape Shops, Cllr. Fisher requested that correspondence be issued to all local authorities in this regard.

Minute No. 104/26

Minutes of District Meetings – for noting

- Municipal District of Dundalk 10th March 2026
- Municipal District of Ardee 2nd April 2026

Minute No. 105/26

Minutes of Committee Meetings – for noting

- Corporate Policy Group 5th March 2026
- Corporate Policy Group 9th April 2026

Minute No. 106/26

Report from Chairperson of Corporate Policy Group

A report was delivered by An Cathaoirleach Seán Kelly on proceedings from the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 7th May 2026.

Minute No. 107/26

Strategic Policy Committee Chairpersons Report

Cllr. Kerley provided an update from the March meeting of the Strategic Policy Committee for Planning.

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

Minute No. 108/26

Approval of Attendance at Conferences and Training Events

Cllr. Butler advised that a number of conferences were not included on the list presented for Members' approval. The Executive indicated that no prior notification in respect of these conferences had been received.

With the addition, as advised by Cllr. Butler, of:

1. Regional Councillors Meeting – 29th April 2026 in Tipperary
2. International Development Conference in Ballymascanlon Hotel
3. Nature Based Solutions Conference on 10th & 11th April in DKIT

The list as put to the meeting, was:-

Proposed by: Cllr. John Sheridan
Seconded by: Cllr. Antóin Watters
And Resolved.

Minute No. 109/26

Allocation of Members Community Grants provided for under Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2001

A discussion was held regarding the deferral of two allocations. A number of Members expressed concern in relation to the deferral, with issues raised regarding the potential for a precedent to be set, the implications for Members' allocations, and the impact on local democratic decision-making.

Acting Director of Services, Ms. Joanna Kelly, confirmed that, following a decision at the Corporate Policy Group, legal advice is being sought to provide clarity on the interpretation and administration of Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2001.

Approval of the grants as presented on the agenda was:

Proposed by: Cllr. Andrea McKevitt
Seconded by: Cllr. Emma Coffey
And Resolved.

Minute No. 110/26

To agree a date for the Annual Council Meeting

It was agreed that the Annual Council Meeting should occur on 15th June 2026 at 10.15am, to facilitate attendance at 9:30am Mass at St. Joseph's Church, with the Ordinary Monthly Meeting to follow at 10:30am.

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

Minute No. 111/26

Draft Annual Report 2025

The Draft Annual Report for 2025 was noted by the Members. Acting Director of Services, Ms. Joanna Kelly stated that a final version of the report will require final adoption at the June monthly meeting.

Cllr. Butler requested that additional detail be included in relation to shopfront grants, including a breakdown of applications approved by district. She also welcomed the initial design of the Fire Service Training Centre in Dundalk and suggested that a briefing session be facilitated for local residents in advance of the commencement of development.

Minute No. 112/26

Louth Tourism Strategy

Senior Executive Officer, Ms. Olivia McCormack presented on the Louth Tourism Strategy for Members approval.

The Strategy was broadly welcomed, with Members engaging in positive and constructive discussion, particularly in relation to the inclusion of clear key performance indicators, ambitious objectives, and measurable outcomes. Members also acknowledged and commended the extensive preparatory work undertaken in developing the Strategy, noting its strong basis in stakeholder consultation and its alignment with both the National Tourism Strategy and Fáilte Ireland's Ancient East Strategy.

Further discussion focused on the provision of motorhome facilities within the County, with confirmation provided that work is underway to identify suitable sites for future development. Members also considered the availability of accommodation across the County, with particular reference to South Louth, and discussed the continued development and promotion of key festivals, including the Táin Festival, Poc Fada, and the Lú Festival, among others.

It was further noted that the County's Greenways are experiencing increasingly levels of usage, with visitor numbers continuing to grow significantly.

The Louth Tourism Strategy was:

Proposed by: Cllr. Michelle Hall
Seconded by: Cllr. Maeve Yore
And Adopted.

Minute No. 113/26

Presentations from Dundalk, Drogheda and Newry Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Paddy Malone (Dundalk Chamber of Commerce), Mr. Michael Savage (Newry Chamber of Commerce), and Mr. Hubert Murphy (Drogheda Chamber of Commerce) delivered comprehensive and insightful presentations to the Members, outlining a range of initiatives currently being progressed by the Chambers across the region. The presentations also highlighted key achievements to date, future plans and deliverables, and the strong and collaborative partnership in place with Louth County Council.

Members acknowledged the presentations and expressed their appreciation for the significant body of work delivered to date. Positive feedback was provided, with Members emphasising the importance of continued collaboration among all stakeholders to support the successful delivery of future initiatives and sustained economic development across the County.

Minute No. 114/26

Amenity Grants 2026

In accordance with Section 66(1) & (9) of the Local Government Act 2001, Acting Director of Services Joanna Kelly presented the Amenity Grants 2026 for approval.

The Amenity Grants for 2026 were:

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

Minute No. 115/26

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

In accordance with Section 11 of the Local Government Act, as amended (which requires Members to report at least annually on the activities and operations of Bodies, Boards and Committees to which they are elected, appointed or nominated to represent Louth County Council).

- Cllr. McGuinness reported on the Creative Spark meeting which took place on 12th February 2026.

Minute No. 116/26

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

No reports.

Minute No. 117/26

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

Finance and System Support

The following was noted in relation to Finance and System Support:

- A report in relation to the income derived from the Vacant Tax Levy will be circulated in the coming days.
- A review of Pay Parking will commence before the end of summer, with a public consultation process to be undertaken in this regard.

Economic Delivery

The following was noted in relation to Economic Delivery:

- Members will be provided with a timeline schedule for future meetings relating to Variation No. 4 of the County Development Plan 2021–2027.
- The OPW will be contacted for an update on works at Roche Castle, and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) will be contacted in relation to motorway signage for Faughart.
- It was confirmed that all proposed drone operators must secure prior permission from the Irish Aviation Authority in advance of any operations. Any associated ground-based infrastructure will also require planning permission from the relevant local authority.
- The Living Cities Initiative was discussed, and it was confirmed that the current mapping, ultimately decided upon by the Department of Finance, is complete.
- Attention was drawn to a derelict property on Main Street, Ardee, where hoarding has been erected for safety purposes. Concern was expressed that the hoarding may itself be contributing to safety issues due to the space it occupies, and it was queried whether it could be repositioned closer to the building. It was agreed that further details would be gathered and investigations undertaken to determine appropriate measures to ensure public safety.

Operations and Environment Delivery

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

- Clarification was sought on the selection of footpaths for repair, and it was confirmed that IPB hotspots are used to determine priority locations.
- Priests Beach, Blackrock, was discussed. Inland Fisheries testing confirmed no evidence of pollution, and it was noted the area is not a designated bathing location. Further investigation into the feasibility of seaweed testing will be undertaken.
- Collision data submitted to the Road Safety Authority will be further reviewed to verify its accuracy and to clarify the scope of data collected and reported.
- Speed signage on Carstown Road, Drogheda, will be assessed, with traffic calming measures to be considered if required.
- Details of CCTV locations will be circulated to Members, along with a report on their effectiveness over the past 12 months.
- Learnings from the Dublin City Council pilot scheme for bins with bottle shelves will be sought and examined as a potential measure to address littering and bin scavenging.
- The potential for introducing a Living Walls initiative in alleyways will be explored by the Executive.
- Reports of abandoned vehicles and unauthorised signage across the County will be investigated and addressed as appropriate.
- The Road Safety Engineer will review safety at Sexton's Junction, Dublin Road, Dundalk, to identify potential improvements in advance of the planned 2027 capital project.
- Maintenance issues on the Carlingford Greenway, including a broken gate, will be assessed by the Operations team for repair.

HR, Corporate and Community Delivery

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

- The Muirhevnamor Masterplan is progressing well.
- Phase 2 of the Athletics Track 2 is now being considered.
- Accessibility seating at An Tain Arts Centre will be examined in light of identified accessibility concerns.

Minute No. 118/26

Suspension of Standing Orders

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

Proposed by: Cllr. Maeve Yore
Seconded by: Cllr. Robert Nash
And Resolved.

Housing and Culture Delivery

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

- Clarification was provided in relation to Choice Based Letting, whereby offers may issue to applicants who have not expressed an interest in a property; however, refusal of a reasonable offer may result in the deferral of further offers for a period of 12 months.
- The introduction of modular extensions was discussed, with the Executive currently examining this approach as a potential affordable housing solution.
- It was noted that additional affordable housing and cost-rental schemes are in development. It was also confirmed that income thresholds for social housing are set at a national level, and that a schedule of limits applicable to each local authority will be circulated to Members.

Major Capital Projects and Infrastructure Delivery

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

- Submissions have been made to the Cities and Towns Investment Fund for additional Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) works from Park Street to Hill Street Bridge, Dundalk, and for the Westgate Vision at St. Nicholas' Quarter.
- A "Changing Places" facility at Scotch Hall Shopping Centre, Drogheda, is at an advanced stage of development.
- Confirmation of funding for Phase 3 of the PANCR development is expected before the end of the month.
- Monaghan County Council is proposing a 'quiet road' pilot project between the villages of Scotstown and Ballinode which is at present subject to public consultation. It was noted that learnings from this pilot project may be examined in due course.
- Work on Laurence's Gate Plaza is progressing, with a Part 8 application to be brought forward following completion of ecological excavations and testing.
- Members will be briefed in advance of a proposed Part 8 application for the Dominican Church development. A construction team has also been appointed to progress works at West Gate House.

Minute No. 119/26

Notice of Motion: Cllr. Ciaran Fisher
Seconded: Cllr. Sionnan McCann

"That Louth County Council calls on the Government of Ireland and the Minister for Finance to examine abolishing the Universal Social Charge (USC) in full.

This Council notes that the USC was introduced in 2011 as a temporary emergency measure during the financial crisis. Fifteen years later, despite the emergency having long passed and successive budgets making only minor adjustments to the bands, the charge remains in place as a permanent additional tax on gross income for workers and families across County Louth and the entire country. Louth County Council therefore resolves to write to the Taoiseach, the Minister for Finance, and all Louth TDs urging the complete abolition of the USC at the earliest possible date, and to request a full report from the Department of Finance on the steps and timeline for its removal."

Reply: B. Woods, Director of Finance
This is a matter for the members.

Minute No. 120/26

Correspondence

Members noted the following correspondence:

- South Dublin County Council 24th April 2026
- Roscommon County Council 5th May 2026

Minute No. 121/26

Condolences

Condolences were extended to the family and friends of:

- Mr. Jackie Moran, Georgian Close, Drogheda
- Mr. Harry Martin, Mary Street, Drogheda

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

Date: 15th June '26

Cathaoirleach: Dáire Hiney

Meeting Administrator: Sinead Doherty