



Comhairle Contae Lú
Louth County Council

LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL - CORPORATE POLICY GROUP

Minutes of the Corporate Policy Group Meeting held in the Setanta Meeting Room, County Hall, on Thursday, 7th May 2026 at 9:30am

In attendance:

Cathaoirleach, Cllr: Seán Kelly

Members, Cllrs: Rachel Kerley, Kevin Meenan, Robert Nash, John Sheridan (online), Pío Smith

Officials: Thomas McEvoy, Deputy Chief Executive
Joanna Kelly, Acting Director of Services
Bernadette Woods, Director of Services
David Hanratty, Acting Director of Services
David Jones, Director of Services
Anthony O'Donoghue, Senior Executive Officer
Sinéad Dooley, Meetings Administrator

Apologies: David Conway, Chief Executive, Ger Murphy, Director of Services

1. Minutes of Meeting held on 9th April 2026

The minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 9th April 2026 were confirmed as

Proposed by: Cllr. Rachel Kerley

Seconded by: Cllr. Pío Smith

And approved

2. Matters Arising

Cllr. Meenan referred to a request made at the meeting of 9th April to have his proposal regarding the erection of a memorial for hunger strikers included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting. It was agreed that the matter would be addressed under Any Other Business.

3. SPC Work Programme – Update from each SPC Chair

Cllr. Meenan confirmed that three separate workshops had been held with the Municipal and Borough Districts in relation to the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy, and that the facilitator was now compiling a report for the SPC for Social Development.

Cllr. Smith indicated that there was no further update on the work of the SPC for Economic Development since last month's report.

Cllr. Nash indicated that the SPC for Community and Placemaking was beginning to advance

the proposed Bye Laws for Cemeteries.

Cllr. Kerley confirmed that a report on the work programme of the SPC for Planning would be presented at this month's Council meeting while, Director of Services, David Hanratty confirmed that the SPC for Climate Change and Sustainability was scheduled to meet in May.

4. Council Meeting Agenda

Acting Director of Services, Joanna Kelly, presented the May Council Meeting Agenda to the Members and highlighted specific matters arising, including:

- Draft Annual Report 2025 for approval
- Louth Tourism Strategy for adoption
- Notice of Motions and Questions as submitted.

In discussing the Louth Tourism Strategy, it was queried whether amendments should be taken from the floor, noting that the Strategy had already undergone a consultation process and had been approved by the relevant SPC. While it was considered that no change was required at a strategic level, it was acknowledged that a fundamental change could be considered if necessary. It was expressed that the role of the SPCs, and the processes in place for the development of such plans and strategies, should be respected and not undermined. It was ultimately agreed that, where a substantial change was proposed, the matter would be put to a vote.

5. Members Allocations

A/Director of Services, Joanna Kelly, drew Members attention to the provisions of the Local Government Act, as amended, specifically Section 66 (6) which provides that:

"A local authority shall not, by virtue of this section, undertake or provide assistance in money or in kind for the undertaking of any activity that would—

(a) prejudice or unnecessarily duplicate activity arising from the performance of a statutory function by any person in the administrative area of the authority, or

(b) having regard to the activities or proposed activities of that person in relation to the area, involve wasteful or unnecessary expenditure by the local authority.

Having regard to the above provision, it was proposed that the inclusion of proposed allocations No. 2 and No. 12 be deferred pending receipt of a legal opinion, in order to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

6. Attendance at Conferences and Events

It was noted that the Chief Executive has expressed an interest in attending the 2026 Assembly of European Regions (AER) Regions' Forum, hosted by Timiș County Council in Romania in June, and the European Year of the Normans in Normandy in July.

It was further suggested that a member of the Twinning Committee should also attend the AER Regions' Forum Assembly.

7. Annual Meeting of Council and Municipal Districts

It was agreed, following experience from the previous year and a subsequent request, that the Annual Meeting of Council would commence at 10:15 a.m. on Monday, 15th June, following Mass at St Joseph's Redemptorist Church at 9:30 a.m. The Ordinary Monthly Meeting of Council will commence at 10:30 a.m., with lunch to be provided immediately thereafter.

It was further agreed that the Annual Meetings of the Municipal and Borough Districts would take place 15 minutes in advance of their respective June Ordinary Meetings.

8. Mayoral Civic Awards 2026 Nominations

The proposed nominations for the 2026 Mayoral Civic Awards were noted. The ceremony is scheduled to take place on Monday, 11th May.

9. Chambers Presentation to Council

Cllr. Kelly advised that he had received a request from the Chambers of Dundalk, Drogheda and Newry to make a presentation outlining their previous joint initiatives and proposed future collaborative opportunities with Louth County Council. It was agreed that the Chambers would be invited to present at the next meeting of Council.

10. Any other business

Hunger Strikers Memorial – Cllr. Meenan sought guidance on how to progress the identification of a suitable parcel of Louth County Council land for the erection of a memorial to hunger strikers. He advised that a design proposal had been submitted to the Chief Executive and Director of Services, Mr Thomas McEvoy.

It was noted that a Memorial Policy was currently being developed by the relevant Strategic Policy Committee with a draft expected in June. However, it was acknowledged that it would be October, realistically, before the policy could be considered by the Corporate Policy Group and Full Council for adoption. Cllr. Meenan stated that he did not wish to await the adoption of the policy and advised that he had raised this specific matter with the Chief Executive in 2025 and again with the Cathaoirleach upon assuming the role of Chair in June 2025.

The Director of Services, David Jones, acknowledged that discussions had taken place with the Chief Executive and advised that a number of Notices of Motion seeking commemorative installations had previously been submitted. He noted that, most recently, the Executive response had been that such matters should be deferred pending the adoption of the Memorial Policy. It was also noted that it could not be assumed that the policy would support any particular proposal, as its function would be to guide and regulate decisions.

In the course of general discussion, a number of issues were noted, including the potential for setting precedent in the absence of an adopted policy, concerns regarding consistency and governance, and the importance of respecting SPC processes. The increasing volume of requests for memorials was also noted as a key factor underpinning the need for a clear policy framework, including consideration of limits and scope.

Cllr. Meenan expressed that he would be hugely disappointed with any further delay and stated that he wished to receive the Chief Executive's opinion on the matter.

It was agreed that Cllr. Meenan would engage further with the Chief Executive and that the matter would return to the Corporate Policy Group for further consideration.

Narrow West Street Drogheda – Cllr. Smith sought confirmation that the Borough District of Drogheda Members would receive an update briefing on Narrow West Street, as previously requested. Director of Services, David Jones, confirmed that the briefing would be provided.

Twinning – A/Director of Services, Joanna Kelly, advised that a delegation from Nettuno was expected to visit on 9th – 10th June. While the itinerary had yet to be decided, it was noted that budgetary constraints would need to be taken into consideration, particularly in light of a further twinning visit expected later in the year.

The Minutes were confirmed at a meeting of the Corporate Policy Group held on:

Date:

4th June 2021

Cathaoirleach:

Seán Kelly

Meetings Administrator:

Sara Doolan