

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE DHUN NA nGALL**

Oifig Riarthóir na gCruinnithe  
Aras an Chontae  
Leifear  
22 Aibreán, 2025

**FOGRA CRUINNITHE**

A Chara,

Beidh Cruinniú Speisialta den Comhairle Chontae Dhún na nGall ar siúl Dé Luain 28 Aibreán, 2025 ag **10.00rn. in Áras an Chontae, Leifear.** Tá Clár an chruinnithe leis seo. Seolfar nasc leictreonach chuig an chruinniú i gcomhfhreagras eile.

Mise, le meas



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**Pádraig Ó Laifearaigh**  
Riarthóir Cruinnithe

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**DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL**

Office of Meetings Administrator  
County House  
Lifford.  
22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2025

**TO EACH MEMBER OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL**

**NOTICE OF MEETING**

**Dear Councillor,**

A Special Meeting of Donegal County Council will be held on Monday 28th April, 2025 at 10.00am in the County House, Lifford. The agenda for the meeting is attached. An online link to join the meeting will issue separately.

**Yours sincerely**



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**Patsy Lafferty**  
Meetings Administrator

## **AGENDA**

**1. Taking of decision pursuant to the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) (Pursuant to Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001**

- To approve the carrying out of works with regard to the construction of 40 No. Social Housing Units at Ballyhasky, Newtowncunningham.

**2. Housing Capital Update.**

**3. House Acquisitions Update**

**4. Homeless Update.**

**5. Roads & Transportation**

- a) Pursuant to Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended) that Donegal County Council enter into agreements with the County Councils of Clare, Galway, Mayo and Sligo, in respect of the Department of Transport Zero Emissions Vehicles Ireland (ZEV) funded project to prepare Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategies for Region 7; whereby Donegal County Council will be enabled to appoint and manage the consultant completing said strategy as relevant to the overall region and incorporating the Counties of Clare, Donegal, Galway (county only), Mayo and Sligo".
- b) To approve the commencement of the Non-Statutory Public Consultation process for the Urban Speed Limit Review.

**6. Corporate Services**

To consider and approve the adoption of the Donegal County Council Annual Report 2024 in accordance with Section 221 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

**7. Attendance at Conference, Seminar or Event**

Authorisation of representation at a seminar, meeting or event under Section 142 (5) of Local Government Act, 2001, S.I. No. 668 of 2006, Local Government (Expenses of Local Authority Members) Regulations 2006, S.I. No. 37 of 2010, Guidelines given by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in relation to the Local Government Act, 2001 (Section 142) Regulations 2010, and the Local Government (Expenses of Local Authority Members) Regulations, 2014 -2025(as amended)

**Travel Abroad**

- Attendance of the Cathaoirleach at Transatlantic Conference as part of the Plymouth /Donegal Sisters Agreement on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

- Attendance of the CPMR representative at the CMPR Political Bureau Meeting in The Hague on the 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2025.

<p align="center"><b>MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNTY HOUSE, LIFFORD ON THE 28<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2025</b></p>
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C/151/25     **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Cllrs N Kennedy, Cathaoirleach, J Beard, L Blaney, M Boyle, F Bradley, C Brogan, P Canning, B Carr, D Coyle, T S Devine, A Doherty, A Farren, D M Kelly, M C Mac Giolla Easbuig, M Mc Clafferty, M Mc Dermott, D Mc Gee, D Meehan, J Murray, M Naughton, D Nic Mheanman, J S O' Fearraigh and M Scanlon  
*Online:* Cllrs J Brogan, G Doherty, M Farren, M Harley, N Jordan, J Kavanagh, P Mc Garvey, P Mc Gowan, M McMahon, G Mc Monagle, and A Molloy.

C/152/25     **OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE**

John Mc Laughlin, Chief Executive, Patsy Lafferty, Director of Housing, Corporate and Cultural Services, Meetings Administrator, John Gallagher, Senior Engineer, Housing Capital, Eamonn Brown, Divisional Manager, Housing & Corporate, Claire Burke, Senior Executive Architect, Housing Design, Jim Boner, Senior Executive Engineer, Housing Design, Linda Mc Cann, Homeless Prevention Officer, Donna Mc Groarty, Area Manager, Housing Design, Thomas Melly, Senior Staff Officer, Housing & Corporate, , Executive Engineer, Housing Design, Aideen Doherty, Ukrainian Response, Co-ordinator, Christina O' Donnell, Staff Officer, Social Inclusion Unit, Róise Ní Laifearthaigh, Rannóg na Gaeilge, Cliona Ni Ghallachoir, Rannóg na Gaeilge, Frances Friel, Communications Officer, William Colvin, Assistant Communications Officer, Anne Marie Crawford, Staff Officer, Corporate Services.

C/153/25`     **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cllr Terry Crossan who was unable to attend the meeting:

C/154/25     **TO APPROVE THE CARRYING OUT OF WORKS WITH REGARD  
TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF 40 NO. SOCIAL HOUSING UNITS AT  
BALLYHASKY, NEWTOWNCUNNINGHAM**

Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above.

On the proposal of Cllr Canning, seconded by Cllr Murray, it was resolved to approve the carrying out of works with regard to the construction of 40 No Social Housing Units including all associated site works at Ballyhasky, Newtowncunningham, Co Donegal in accordance with Part XI of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001(as amended).

C/155/25     **THAT DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL ENTER INTO AGREEMENTS  
WITH THE COUNTY COUNCILS OF CLARE,GALWAY, MAYO AND  
SLIGO IN RESPECT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT  
ZERO EMISIONS VEHICLES IRELAND FUNDED PROJECT TO  
PREPARE ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE**

## **STRATEGIES FOR REGION 7**

Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above.

On the proposal of Cllr M Boyle, seconded by Cllr F Bradley it was agreed that pursuant to Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended) that Donegal County Council enter into agreements with the County Councils of Clare, Galway, Mayo and Sligo, in respect of the Department of Transport Zero Emissions Vehicles Ireland (ZEV) funded project to prepare Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategies for Region 7; whereby Donegal County Council will be enabled to appoint and manage the consultant completing said strategy as relevant to the overall region and incorporating the Counties of Clare, Donegal, Galway (county only), Mayo and Sligo".

C/156/25

## **TO APPROVE THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE NON-STATUTORY PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS FOR THE URBAN SPEED LIMIT REVIEW**

Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above.

On the proposal of Cllr Bradley, seconded by Cllr A Farren it was resolved to approve the commencement of the non-statutory public consultation process for the Urban Speed Limit Review.

C/157/25

## **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – TO MEET IN COMMITTEE**

In accordance with Standing Order No 28 it was resolved to suspend Standing Order No 8 and to continue with the meeting in committee pursuant to Section 45 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended) to facilitate discussion on the planned anti-immigration protest scheduled to take place in Letterkenny on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2025.

C/158/25

## **RESUMPTION OF THE MEETING**

The Cathaoirleach at this juncture opened the meeting and continued for the remainder of the meeting in public session.

C/159/25

## **TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE ADOPTION OF THE DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2024**

Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above.

On the proposal of Cllr Meehan, seconded by Cllr Canning it was resolved to approve the adoption of the Donegal County Council Annual Report 2024 in accordance with Section 221 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

C/160/25

## **TO AGREE DATE FOR THE NEXT PLENARY WORKSHOP ON THE DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTION SCHEME**

It was unanimously agreed to hold a Plenary Workshop in relation to the Draft Development Contribution Scheme on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2025 at 10a.m. in the County House, Lifford.

C/161/25

### **ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCE, SEMINAR OR EVENT**

Having noted authorisation of representation at a seminar, meeting or event under Section 142 (5) of Local Government Act, 2001, S.I. No. 668 of 2006, Local Government (Expenses of Local Authority Members) Regulations 2006, S.I. No. 37 of 2010, Guidelines given by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in relation to the Local Government Act, 2001 (Section 142) Regulations 2010, and the Local Government (Expenses of Local Authority Members) Regulations, 2014 -2025(as amended).  
On the proposal of Cllr Scanlon, seconded by Cllr Canning attendance at the following was approved.

#### **Travel Abroad**

- Attendance of the Cathaoirleach at Transatlantic Conference as part of the Plymouth /Donegal Sisters Agreement on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May in Plymouth, Massachusetts.
- Attendance of the CPMR representative at the CPMR Political Bureau Meeting in The Hague on the 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2025.

C/162/25

### **HOUSING UPDATES**

Cllr Devine asked if there had been any indication or confirmation from the new Housing Minister as to whether he intended to come to Donegal to see the conditions that defective concrete block affected homeowners were living in. He said that the 100% Redress Party had been on the Council for nearly a year, and nothing was being done at national level to assist families living in mould and rat infested accommodation. He expressed grave concern at the lack of action and the failure to provide a social housing remediation scheme. Donegal County Council was, he contended not doing enough to get the message across that immediate intervention and action was needed. As a result, he said, that the 100% Redress members had no option but to leave the meeting in protest at the lack of intervention and the failure to address this ongoing housing crisis.

Mr Patsy Lafferty, Director Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services advised members that updates would be provided in relation to the Housing Capital Programme, Housing Acquisition initiatives and ongoing developments within the Homeless Service.

Mr John Gallagher, Senior Engineer gave a detailed update on the status of Turnkey Acquisitions, In House Projects, Design & Build Projects together with an overview of the Letterkenny Flagship Projects.

Mr Eamonn Brown, Senior Executive Officer, Housing & Corporate provided an update on the Social Housing Second Hand Acquisitions Programme 2025 highlighting the priority acquisition categories, and the associated funding and compliance measures. The purpose of the Programme, he advised was to increase the supply of social housing

through targeted second-hand acquisitions for priority categories. It was noted that the overall national budget was €325 million and that the 2025 allocation would not be a number allocation and available only for four priority acquisition categories only. The four categories were identified as follows:

- Tenancy Sustainment (Tenant -In Situ)
- Exits from Homelessness Services
- Persons with Disabilities
- Buy and Renew (Vacant /Derelict Properties)

Members were informed that 10 units had been acquired in 2024 at a combined cost of €1,888,977.40. It was noted that the Department had been allocated €2 million for 2025 under the Social Housing Second Hand Acquisitions Programme. This, he advised, was subject to review and meeting the revised criteria and that improvement works were not generally eligible under the priority acquisition category- tenancy sustainment. Overall, he said, there was no general house acquisition programme and there was limited capacity under the current capital funding allocation.

Ms Linda Mc Cann, Homeless Prevention Coordinator updated members in relation to homeless services in Donegal and confirmed that there were currently 43 single adults and 4 families availing of homeless supports. Service users, she advised, were staying longer in homeless services due to the lack of private rented accommodation/HAP properties etc and also due to the lack of affordable rental accommodation. Of those availing of the service, she confirmed that, over 50% of the clients had mental health/addition issues.

It was noted that the Homeless Action Plan for the Northwest Region had been endorsed by the Council and that the key priorities now were to

- Roll out the Homeless Prevention Service within the Council.
- Establish the role of HAP Placefinder.
- Provide a lead role to other agencies providing wraparound services to service users.
- Engage with the Housing First Programme.
- Aim for the creation of temporary tenancies through the Shared Accommodation & Transition Home Models.

The Homeless Prevention Team, she advised, were tasked with the implementation of the NW Regional Homeless Plan 2023-2028 and with the delivery of three strategic aims which included preventing homelessness, providing support services and creating progression pathways into housing. A detailed analysis of each specific aim was provided.

Several specific case studies were presented.

Concluding, members were informed that homelessness was not unique to Donegal and that the Action Plan allowed a structure to be put in place for the roll out of the service. It was important, she noted, that there was an understanding of the scale of the issues and a knowledge of what needed to be done going forward. She encouraged members to engage with the Area Housing Teams and the Homeless Service Team.

Mr Patsy Lafferty, Director of Service alluded to the fact that the presentations had provided a good overview of where the Council was at and of the work that needed to be done. He noted that a HAP Placefinder position had been created to assist those who were finding it difficult to secure accommodation under the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Scheme together with creation of a Tenancy Sustainment Officer as a support to assist people in retaining tenancies.

A lengthy debate took place with members raising the following issues:

- Need for Homeless Emergency Accommodation in all Municipal Districts.
- Noted the excellent work being carried out by the Homeless Service Team.
- Acknowledgement that the Homeless team have significant challenges to deal with on a day to day basis and that their remit involves ongoing collaboration with several other agencies.
- Contended that there were a considerable number of “Hidden homeless” for whom the current voucher system was inadequate and not suitable. Noted that the hostel option was under severe stress at present.
- Acknowledged the need for a stepdown service for homeless persons with addiction issues as this would be of enormous benefit and would help prevent relapses. It was noted that the Drumboe Respite Centre had been closed since 2020 and that there was no other accommodation of this nature available in the county.
- General welcome for the new HAP Placefinder staff member.
- HAP monies are not sufficient and with the current cost of living many more people will find themselves homeless.
- €2m allocated to Donegal for the Tenant-In Situ Scheme is totally inadequate and it was noted that Donegal has only received 0.6% of the overall national allocation.
- Noted that some applicants were to be dropped from the Tenant-In-Situ Scheme and that there was little movement on applications in the Letterkenny/Milford MD over the past number of years.
- Concern raised as to the lack of housing provision in Ballyshannon and the delay in progressing same given that up to 100 houses are needed at this location. Members said that it was taking too long to get blocks on the ground around the



county generally and that Donegal County Council needed to work with the developers at all levels.

- Welcome for the 42 units in train in the Milford Electoral Area but concern raised that this represented only 17% of the overall housing need in the Milford area.
- Budget allocation for housing acquisition in the Milford Area is unrealistic and will only make minimal changes to the housing stock.
- Many of the policies included in the “Housing for All” initiative are not working in Donegal.
- Members encouraged to engage with the Area Housing teams and the Homeless Service teams at MD level.
- Tenants living in defective concrete block houses should not be presented with rental decreases not rental increases.
- Donegal County Council is not delivering an eligible Affordable Purchase Scheme.
- Message needs to go out that the sum of €2m allocated under the Social Housing Second Hand Acquisitions Programme 2025 is insufficient and a slight to Donegal.
- Tenant Purchase Scheme is not working, and the overall policy needs to be reviewed including the associated timelines. Elderly tenants are being caused unnecessary delays especially where they want to sign the house over to a family member.
- Reason must be given as to why Donegal is receiving so little money under the Second Hand Acquisitions Programme 2025.
- Housing must be provided in our smaller towns and villages so as to sustain rural communities. Liscooley, Cloghan and Laghy identified as needing additional accommodation.
- Must be continual liaison with the local Oireachtas members in relation to accessing the various funding strata.

### **Questions**

- Has there been any further update from the Department in relation to the remediation of social housing impacted by defective concrete blocks?
- Query as to when the Construction Industry Federation would be available to meet with members.
- Is the budget for the 2025 Tenant-In-Situ Scheme based on activity and previous years allocations/
- With over 50% of service users in the Homeless Service presenting as having mental health or addiction issues, does this represent an increase or a decrease on previous years?
- Are the projections for housing provision to the end of 2026 in the Milford Electoral Area realistic?
- Can further information be provided on the ten houses were acquired under the Acquisition Programme in Donegal?
- Are there caps in place as to what Donegal can spend in terms of modifying or adapting houses for the elderly/disabled throughout the county?
- How many people are in “Housing First” Projects in the county?

- What impact will the upgraded IS465 have on the Tenant Purchase Scheme and on the timelines for the testing of houses?
- Is there anything that the Local Authority can do to incentivise and encourage contractors to take on apprentices given the current labour shortages.

### **Follow-Up**

Requested that members concerns in relation to the acquisitions allocation be conveyed to the Department and an increased allocation sought. Case needs to be made for an increase and to establish what can be done for people who went ahead and got their houses tested.

Mr Patsy Lafferty, Director Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services thanked members for their comments and noted that there had been 10 units provided under the 2024 Second Hand Acquisitions Programme with 15-16 targeted for completion in 2025. There had been no application process, he confirmed, but continual engagement had taken place with the Department in relation to same. Other Local Authorities, he advised, were in a similar position. Noting the concern expressed by members in relation to the funding aspect, he said, that it would be possible to express the sentiment raised by members in the form of a letter to the Department. With regard to the Social Housing Remediation Scheme for houses affected by defective concrete blocks, he confirmed, that a positive meeting had taken place with the Department last month and that it was intended that another one would take place in May. He said that it was hoped this would bring some positive news but that without Department approval and funding a remediation scheme could not proceed.

He alluded to the fact that the timelines for acquiring test results were inadequate and affecting a range of initiatives such as the Tenant Purchase Scheme, the Acquisition Programme etc. The new IS465 standard when available would, he confirmed, have a positive impact and that this was something that would then be worked through the Housing SPC.

Mr Eamonn Brown, Divisional Manager, Housing & Corporate in relation to the provision of homeless accommodation advised that each case was looked on an individual basis and confirmed that the voucher system was still in place. A concerted effort, he said, was being made to make use of the two hostels that were in place where there was full-time supervision, and the staff concerned were all Garda vetted thus providing a secure accommodation setting.

The role of the HAP Placefinder would also, he advised, contribute to the approach in addressing homelessness. He encouraged members when approached regarding homeless situations or by those who may be couch surfing to direct clients in the first instance to the Homeless

Clinics. The HAP Placefinder would be able to help here, he said, having built up a relationship with estate agents etc. It was, he added, specifically about homeless prevention in the first instance and this was what the clinics were designed to assist with.

Responding to Cllr Meehan, he said, that under the “Housing First Programme” there were 11 individuals availing of the initiative at present with a target of 26 to be included by the end of 2028. The tender for the delivery of same was, he confirmed, expected to be rolled out nationally and contact would be made with the Department regarding increasing the number of slots for Donegal. “Housing First”, he advised, included provision for various wraparound services and the ambition was to aim higher than the 26 referenced above.

Ms Linda Mc Cann, Homeless Prevention Officer, responding to a query from Cllr Blaney, said that there had been an increase in those presenting as homeless as a result of mental health and addiction issues. She alluded to the fact that there was continuous liaison with a number of associated services and that all concerned were involved with the overall client care plan. Services were offered, she added, but it was crucial that the individual concerned was in a position to want the help that was available.

The Cathaoirleach thanked members for attending and advised that the next Special Meeting would take place on the 28<sup>th</sup> May.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Cathaoirleach:\_\_\_\_\_

Dated:\_\_\_\_\_