

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE DHUN NA nGALL

Oifig Riarthóir na gCruinnithe
Aras an Chontae
Leifear
22 Meán Fómhair, 2025

FOGRA CRUINNITHE

A Chara,

Beidh Cruinniú Speisialta den Comhairle Chontae Dhún na nGall ar siúl Dé hAoine 26 Meán Fómhair, 2025 ag **11.00rn. in Áras an Chontae, Leifear.** Tá Clár an chruinnithe leis seo. Seolfar nasc leictreonach chuig an chruinniú i gcomhfhreagras eile.

Mise, le meas



Pádraig Ó Laifearthaigh
Riarthóir Cruinnithe

DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Office of Meetings Administrator
County House
Lifford.
22nd September, 2025

TO EACH MEMBER OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

NOTICE OF MEETING

Dear Councillor,

A Special Meeting of Donegal County Council will be held on Friday 26th September 2025 at 11.00am in the County House, Lifford. The agenda for the meeting is attached. An online link to join the meeting will issue separately.

Yours sincerely



Patsy Lafferty
Meetings Administrator

AGENDA

1. Housing Capital Update.

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNTY HOUSE, LIFFORD ON THE 26TH SEPTEMBER 2025
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C/313/25

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs P Canning, Cathaoirleach, J Beard, D Coyle, T. S Devine, D. M Kelly, N Kennedy, and G McMonagle.

Online: Cllrs L Blaney, M Boyle, C Brogan, J Brogan, B Carr, T. Crossan, A Doherty, A Farren, M Farren, M Harley, J Kavanagh, Mac Giolla Easbuig, M Mc Bride, M Mc Clafferty, P Mc Garvey, D Mc Gee, P Mc Gowan, D Meehan, J Murray, M Naughton, D Nic Mheanman, J O' Fearraigh and M Scanlon.

C/314/25

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr John Mc Laughlin, Chief Executive, Patsy Lafferty, Director of Housing, Corporate and Cultural Services, Meetings Administrator, Liam Ward, Director Community Development & Planning Services, Eamonn Brown, Divisional Manager, Housing & Corporate, Donal Walker, Senior Engineer, Housing Capital, Claire Burke, Senior Executive Architect, Housing Design/Construction, Jim Boner, Senior Executive Engineer, Housing Design/Construction, Donna Mc Groarty, Area Manager, Housing Design/Construction, Róise Ní Laifeartaigh, Rannóg na Gaeilge, Clíona Ní Ghallachóir, Rannóg na Gaeilge, William Colvin, Assistant Communications Officer, Anne Marie Crawford, Staff Officer, Corporate Services.

C/315/25

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Mc Mahon, Mr Garry Martin, Director Economic Development, Information Systems and Emergency Services and Mr John Gallagher, Senior Engineer who were unable to attend the meeting.

C/316/25

HOUSING CAPITAL UPDATE

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

Mr Donal Walker, Senior Engineer provided an update on the status of the various social housing projects since the last Special Meeting on the 25th July 2025. This included detail on projects which had commenced, those that had been completed and those currently awaiting planning approval. An overview of those at tender stage was also provided.

Mr Jim Boner, Senior Executive Engineer gave an overview of the various projects onsite together with a status update on projects currently at tender stage.

Ms Claire Burke, Senior Executive Architect outlined the status of projects at planning and detailed design stage. An analysis was also provided in relation to the various projects at pre-planning stage.

Ms Donna Mc Groarty, Area Manager, Housing Design/ Construction highlighted and presented information on a range of projects being pursued through the competitive dialogue process.

Mr Patsy Lafferty, Director Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services said that the focus going forward would be on updating members on the progress made since the previous meeting and as to where the various housing projects were at.

Issues Raised

- Housing team complimented on their work and effort to date in moving forward the housing programme.
- Concern raised that the net need of 1300 units is inaccurate given that there are currently 1300 people on the waiting list in Letterkenny.
- Suggested that homelessness is not being adequately addressed especially in the Glenties Municipal District. People are emigrating as they cannot access housing.
- Development at Hughie Joes, Gaoth Dobhair – capacity there for further development if the Council did the sewerage connection works themselves.
- High rents and Defective Concrete Blocks issue are having a major impact on the housing crisis.
- Letterkenny needs additional housing units.
- Need to ensure that housing for people with disabilities is prioritised and that adaptation works are progressed as people with disabilities are being excluded from housing.
- General welcome for the progress with S.I Housing.
- Highlighted the fact that a site had been identified in Killybegs during discussions on the Local Area Plan as being suitable for older people's housing given the flat nature of the site and its proximity to the town centre. Request that this be kept in mind going forward.
- Noted that temporary works had been carried out on several houses in the Ard na Guala Duibhe site in Moville and that this was to be welcomed. Highlighted the fact that several of the houses in the estate needed emergency repair works before the onset of winter.
- Update sought on lands at Ballynally, Moville and in terms of available land for housing and housing development in Moville.
- Housing development crucial for rural Ireland.
- Urgent need for housing in the Milford Electoral Area including all associated utility services.
- Uisce Éireann clinics are not working and there needs to be greater interaction.
- More independent living facilities needed.
- Greater emphasis needed to highlight the fact that 85% of houses in a Gaeltacht development should be assigned to Irish speakers.

- No reference made to the use of modular homes.

Queries

- Are there completion dates for the projects at Oranhill, Killylartin and for the Cluid Project?
- What analysis is being done in terms of accessible housing and homes for older people especially at pre planning stage.
- What is being done to address the healthcare, social and community needs in relation to a number of the larger projects and those in the Letterkenny area?
- Is the Council still pursuing the acquisition of lands throughout the county?
- Are there lands available for housing in Inishowen?
- What can be done to assist the four private properties adjacent to the development in Dunkineely gain access to the public sewer?
- What is happening in relation to the development in An Fál Carrach and is there a dedicated timeline?
- Why are the costs associated with building S.I houses so high?
- Given the unique situation in Donegal where are we at in terms of making a special case for the county in terms of the Housing Acquisition Programme?
- Did the Council make an application in relation in respect of the €80m recently allocated by the Department for house acquisition?
- Submission needs to be made to the Department regarding increasing the thresholds for the acquisition of S.I housing as this would allow more people to get on the property ladder.

Mr Patsy Lafferty, Director Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services in response to the query on the €80m allocated nationally for house acquisition said that same was based on population and housing need. Every effort would be made, he contended, to make the case for Donegal considering its own unique housing circumstances. He noted that there were several queries on the various housing thresholds and that there would be an opportunity to discuss same at the Plenary Meeting on the 29th September.

Mr Donal Walker, Senior Engineer, updated the meeting in relation to a number of projects in Letterkenny.

It was confirmed that submissions to the Department were based on gross need. He also outlined the fact that the timeline for a specific project depended on the project itself and the scale of same with developments having to go through the same planning process as private sector projects. He noted that considerable effort had gone in to streamlining the process and preparing the information needed so that the necessary groundworks could be completed prior to construction. There was an acknowledgement that there had been issue with some of the legacy sites. Every effort was now being made, he said, in terms

of in-house development, design and build and turnkey projects to accelerate the timelines as quickly as possible. It was difficult, he added to provide a definitive timeline as all projects involved the use of public monies and contracts had to be robust to deliver projects in line with the public purse.

Mr Walker confirmed that 30% of all Houses in Donegal had to be universally adapted or be readily adaptable for people with special needs. He said that increased thresholds had been identified for turnkey projects in terms of universal design to cater for special needs applicants.

Land for housing was he stated being actively pursued with priority being given to buying and building on our own land to deliver housing in the short and long-term.

It was noted that S.I Cottage applications were being prioritised as they came in and that seven developments were progressing at present.

Work, he stated, was ongoing in Inishowen, and there was potential to look at smaller and larger developments.

Referencing the 4 private houses adjacent to the development in Dunkineely, he confirmed that application to the public mains would be a matter for the property owners concerned but that the Council would assist if possible as the development proceeded. The homeowners concerned, he added, needed to contact Uisce Éireann directly.

There were, he advised, two projects progressing in An Fál Carrach including AHB and turnkey project The turnkey project, it was noted, was projected to be on site in the first quarter of 2026 depending on the Uisce Éireann application.

It was acknowledged that there had been ongoing engagement with the Department in relation to use of modular homes.

€2m of an allocation, it was confirmed, had been received in 2025 for house acquisition and a subsequent increase of 30% provided. He confirmed that there was ongoing engagement with the Department in relation to same and with regard to buying additional units. It was he confirmed particularly difficult in Donegal given the defective concrete block issues and the need for testing.

Concluding, he said, that if members had additional queries, they could contact the team directly.

Mr John Mc Laughlin, Chief Executive said that it had been a positive meeting and that it was now obvious that considerable progress had been made. He acknowledged the fact that there were challenges ahead in terms of delivering over 1800 units and that it would be

necessary to have clear oversight of the task that was ahead. There were difficulties also, he noted, in terms of recruiting staff to work on the programme. It would be necessary, he added, for all stakeholders and the elected members to work collectively to progress same. He referenced also the fact that the Council would have to pay tax on land that it bought in the future, and this was detrimental to the overall objective. Uisce Éireann's investment programme also needed to be aligned with the Council's needs, he said, and this would necessitate a change in policy going forward.

He welcomed the fact that the Department wanted to move to a single stage application process but indicated that there were conditions that needed to be further clarified as local authorities could end up carrying additional costs. Considerable efforts were being made to streamline the process, he stated, and to ensure that the value for money aspect was adhered to.

He alluded to the fact that success was measured on numbers and that there was little or no credit for small developments that were vital for rural communities. Thus, a fairer reporting system was needed, he added.

Concluding, he said, that he appreciated that there were concerns in relation to the average delivery times, but that cognisance had to be taken of the scale of development and the resources available.

Cllr Mc Monagle at this juncture said that he believed there was no need to have a housing update every month and proposed that the Special Meetings could be used to focus on other issues such as the urban and rural regeneration projects where specific issues/barriers had emerged in relation to a few of these projects. This was seconded by Cllr Devine who indicated that there were a range of issues across the various services that would benefit from further discussion.

The Chief Executive said that it would be beneficial for a short housing update to be provided going forward but that the inclusion of other items warranted careful consideration and inclusion in a structured manner.

He said that he would liaise with the Cathaoirleach and that a more comprehensive schedule could be drawn up for 2026.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Cathaoirleach:_____

Dated:_____