

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE DHUN NA nGALL

Oifig Riarthóir na gCruinnithe
Aras an Chontae
Leifear
24 Deireadh Fómhair, 2025

FOGRA CRUINNITHE

A Chara,

Beidh Cruinniú Speisialta den Comhairle Chontae Dhún na nGall ar siúl Dé hAoine 31 Mean 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.
24th October, 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 31st October 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**
Housing Capital Update.
2. **Emergency Services**
To consider report on submission proposed for the Donegal Fire Authority for “Fire Services Capital Programme 2026-2030” and the proposal that a submission be made to the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage requesting funding for the construction of a single fire station to facilitate a minimum of two pumping appliances at Finner, Co Donegal under the Fire Services 5 Year Capital Plan 2026-2030.
3. **Community Development**
To approve the nomination of Shauna Mc Clenaghan, Inishowen Development Partnership to fill the vacancy on the Donegal Local Community Development Committee in accordance with Part 6 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and Section 128C (3)(b) of the Local Government Act, 2001.
4. **Planning**
Proposed Variation No 1. to the County Development Plan 2024-2030 - Update.
5. **Roads & Transportation**
 1. Approval for the Annual Transport Infrastructure Ireland delegation to Dublin. (Date to be confirmed)
 2. TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project Donegal - Update
6. **Attendance at Conferences, Training & Events**
Attendance of the Leas-Cathaoirleach at the Donegal Association London Annual Ball & Awards in Wembley, London on the 22nd November, 2026.

<p align="center">MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNTY HOUSE, LIFFORD ON THE 31ST OCTOBER 2025</p>
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C/374/25

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs P Canning, Cathaoirleach, J Beard, M Boyle, F Bradley, C Brogan, J Brogan, D Coyle, A Doherty, A Farren, N Jordan, D. M Kelly, N Kennedy, M Mc Clafferty, P Mc Gowan, M Mc Mahon, G McMonagle, M. Naughton and D Nic Mheanman.

Online: Cllrs L Blaney, B Carr, T. Crossan, T.S. Devine, G Doherty, M Farren, J Kavanagh, M Choilm Mac Giolla Easbuig, M Mc Dermott, P Mc Garvey, J Murray, and J.S O' Fearraigh.

C/375/25

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr John Mc Laughlin, Chief Executive, Patsy Lafferty, Director of Housing, Corporate and Cultural Services, Meetings Administrator, Eamonn Brown A/Director Community Development & Planning Services, Bryan Cannon, Director Roads & Transportation, Garry Martin, Director Economic Development, Information Systems and Emergency Services, John Gallagher, Senior Engineer, Housing Capital Donna Mc Groarty, /Divisional Manager, Housing & Corporate, Claire Burke, Senior Executive Architect, Housing Design/Construction, Brenda Ferguson, Senior Executive Engineer, Housing Design/Construction, Eilish Mc Laughlin, Housing Design/Construction, Michael Scott, A/ Chief Fire Officer, Edward Gallagher, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Damian Mc Dermott, Senior Engineer, N.R.O, Aine Mc Hugh, Senior Executive Engineer, N.R.O, William Colvin, Assistant Communications Officer, Anne Marie Crawford, Staff Officer, Corporate Services.

C/376/25

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllrs Harley and Meehan who were unable to attend the meeting.

C/377/25

**DONEGAL FIRE AUTHORITY - FIRE SERVICES CAPITAL
PROGRAMME 2026-2030 – PROPOSAL FOR A SINGLE FIRE
STATION TO FACILITATE A MINIMUM OF TWO PUMPING
APPLIANCES AT FINNER, CO DONEGAL**

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

Cllr Naughton as Chair of the Donegal Municipal District welcomed the report and noted that this issue had been long standing item over the past 40 years. He said that there had been considerable debate over that period with the favoured position being the locating of two separate fire stations in Bundoran and Ballyshannon. Agreement now to proceed with a single Fire Station was a positive move, he added for the Donegal Municipal District.

Cllr J Brogan said he was appreciative of the fact that consultation had taken place and that there was agreement to proceed with one fire station.

Cllr Naughton thus proposed, seconded by Cllr J Brogan that a submission be made to the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage requesting funding for the construction of a single fire station to facilitate two pumping appliances at Finner, Co Donegal under the Fire Services 5 Year Capital Plan 2026 – 2030.

It was further resolved on the proposal of Cllr J Brogan, seconded by Cllr Jordan that an application be made also for a new Fire station at Glencolmcille.

Members in the Donegal Municipal District acknowledged that it had been a lengthy process, and that a concerted and committed effort had been made to try and secure two fire stations in the Ballyshannon/Bundoran area. The commitment of all involved in the process was noted and there was general acknowledgement that the proposed site was in the optimal location. There was also general agreement that every effort should be made to seek approval and funding for a new station in Glencolmcille.

Mr Garry Martin, Director Economic Development, Information Services and Emergency Services welcomed the endorsement by members and paid tribute to all who had worked tirelessly to secure the best possible outcome. In relation to the proposal for Glencolmcille, he said that it would be possible to put forward a proposal to the National Fire Directorate highlighting the importance of same. He said that he anticipated that funding would be made available for at least one of the projects highlighted.

The Cathaoirleach paid tribute to fire service personnel and the competent and professional manner in which they carried out their duties.

It was agreed that further discussion would take place at the Fire Service Plenary workshop on the 5th November.

Cllr Mc Gowan raised the issue of fire hydrants and advised of the need for a proper checking mechanism together with clarity as to who was responsible for maintaining same. It was agreed to discuss the matter further at the workshop on the 5th November.

C/378/25

HOUSING CAPITAL UPDATE DONEGAL

Members received an update in relation to the Housing Capital Programme and progress made since the 26th September 2025.

Mr John Gallagher, Senior Engineer, Housing Capital, briefed members and gave an overview of the projects completed in the period 2022-2025 including projects currently on site.

Ms Claire Burke, Senior Executive Architect, outlined the status of projects currently at tender stage, planning and detailed design stage,

together with those at pre-planning. Members were updated in relation to the planned actions for November 2025.

A lengthy debate ensued, and the following issues raised.

Issues Raised

- SI applications and thresholds. S.I provision needs to be enhanced and adequate thresholds in place to accommodate those seeking to live on their own land in rural areas.
- Upfront approach needed with the Department of Housing in terms of securing additional funding for the remediation of derelict social housing.
- Delays in the payment of defective concrete blocks grants need to be addressed.
- Better forward planning needed in relation to the provision of accommodation for people with disabilities.
- Additional staff needed to deal with Housing Adaptation and Essential Repair Grant applications .
- Anomaly to be addressed in that social housing tenants who own their own land cannot apply for an S.I House.
- Delays in land acquisition a problem especially in the Lifford/Stranorlar Municipal District. Need to look a better way of addressing legacy issues.

Queries

- Is engagement continuing with Uisce Éireann in relation to developments withing the Settlement Frameworks?
- What is in the pipeline for Inishowen?
- Has there been any update in terms of an increase in staffing resources?
- Clarity requested in relation to the Competitive Dialogue process.
- How long does it take from site acquisition to the completion of a development?
- How long does it take for the granting of final approval?
- What percentage of the 1805 units referenced can accommodate families with physical and special needs?
- What is in the pipeline and what is planned in terms of housing those with disabilities?
- What is being provided overall in respect of Group Homes?
- Query as to why funding is not being sought for modular homes given the extent of the housing crisis in Donegal.

Follow- Up

- Update requested per Municipal District in relation to the Acquisition Programme. Land acquisition process and associated timelines to be presented again at the next Special Meeting.
- Further correspondence to issue to T.I.I about the restriction of access onto the N56 and the long-term impact on the provision of one-off housing.
- Detail requested on the progress of the S.I development at Listillion.

- Update sought on the Social Housing Remediation Scheme.
- Briefing note to be brought to a Special Meeting in relation to the ongoing engagement with Uisce Éireann.
- Detailed breakdown of the Competitive Dialogue/ Turnkey process to be presented to members.
- Cllr Coyle to be briefed on the status of the S.I at Listillion.
- Cllr Beard to be updated in relation to the use of modern methods of construction and rapid methods of delivery.
- Cllr Mc Gowan to be provided with an update on the status of land acquisition for social housing in the Lifford/Stranorlar Municipal District.
- Specific queries on the payment of individual defective concrete block grant payments to be brought to the attention of the DCB Team.
- Detail on the provision of Group Homes to be provided at MD level.

Mr John Gallagher, Senior Engineer advised that a number of the issues raised would be dealt with through the Municipal District workshop process. He informed members that there was ongoing engagement with Uisce Éireann in respect of all the projects referenced and that it would be possible to provide an update on the engagement to date including issues raised during the meeting. It was acknowledged that there were challenges but that the current level of co-operation would remain in place.

He said that there was a continuing focus on land acquisition within settlement frameworks where there was sufficient potential to develop. Several potential land acquisitions were being dealt with, he added, and every effort made to deal with service and utility issues at an early stage in the process. It was noted that there was regular contact with the Department in relation to same and that the expression of interest portal on the Council's website was active. As always, he said, that there were issues in relation to conveyancing, but that these were being worked through.

Mr Gallagher said that there was good interaction with the Housing Agency and supportive mechanisms in place. It was confirmed that every effort was made to engage with developers at an early stage so that the right housing could be provided in the right location.

He said that it was accepted that more needed to be done in terms of the universal design aspect but that several initiatives were being utilised at present. There was also, he added, substantial interaction with the various Housing Area Managers on the needs of those on the housing waiting lists and this information was relayed to the design team.

Cllr Beard was informed that there was ongoing contact with the Department in terms of modern and rapid methods of construction and that there was contact with developers also in relation new methods of construction and rapid methods of delivery.

Mr Patsy Lafferty, Director Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services alluding to Cllr A Farren's query on S.I. eligibility related to social housing income thresholds generally and advised that this was not something that the Council had a direct decision making role on and was a national matter. It was noted that the matter had been raised by Cllr Mc Monagle in a recent motion and that correspondence had issued to the Department seeking the removal of Donegal from Band 3 of the Social Housing limits and moved to Band 1.

Staffing resources were an issue, he said, and it was hoped that current engagement with the Department in relation to the Workforce Plan would have positive impacts going forward. There was also ongoing consideration of the resource implications by the Local Government sector on behalf of all local authorities.

With regard to a number of queries on defective concrete block payments, he asked the members to give him the specific details and he would follow up with the DCB Team.

Members were informed that the number of council owned houses vacant at any one time was generally in the region of 25 to 35 out of a total of 5000. Most of these, it was noted, were casual vacancies that were being refurbished at present.

Statistics varied, he added, and often referenced high levels of vacancy, but the crux of the matter was that up to 80 houses were vacant as a result of defective concrete issues and could not be renovated until the remediation scheme was in place.

There was acknowledgement also that an inter-agency approach was in place in terms of providing Group Homes. Details of specific projects, he confirmed, could be provided at Municipal District level.

C/379/25

CASUAL VACANCY ON THE DONEGAL LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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

On the proposal of Cllr Bradley, seconded by Cllr Mc Gowan it was resolved that Shauna Mc Clenaghan, Inishowen Development Partnership fill the casual vacancy on the Donegal Local Community Development Committee in accordance with Part 6 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and Section 128C (3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2001.

C/380/25

ADJOURNMENT

It was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting until 1.45pm.

C/381/25

HOUSING CAPITAL UPDATE DONEGAL

Mr Patsy Lafferty, Director Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services said that he had spoken to the Defective Concrete Block team during lunch

break and advised that as of week ending 24th October there was a very positive update in that in general payments were being processed relatively speedily, with only four payment claims outstanding from the previous month. A small number of other cases which had been queried related to outstanding information that would be followed up individually. This was welcomed.

C/382/25

**ANNUAL TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE IRELAND
DELEGATION TO DUBLIN**

On the proposal of Cllr Jordan, seconded by Cllr Kennedy it was unanimously agreed that a delegation from Donegal County Council would meet with Transport Infrastructure Ireland in Dublin at a date to be confirmed in December 2025.

C/383/25

**ATTENDANCE AT THE DONEGAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL BALL
AND AWARDS IN LONDON ON THE 22ND NOVEMBER AND AT
THE CPMR GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN BARCELONA FROM THE
19TH TO THE 22ND NOVEMBER.**

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).

The Cathaoirleach noted that a request had been received to attend the CPMR General Assembly in Barcelona.

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr Jordan it was resolved to approve the attendance of the following:

- Cllr Donal Kelly, Leas-Cathaoirleach at the Donegal Association London Annual Ball and Awards in London on the 22nd November 2025.
- Attendance of Cllr John S. O' Fearraigh (Alternate CPMR Rep) at the 53rd CPMR General Assembly in Barcelona from the 19th to the 22nd November 2025.

C/384/25

**PROPOSED VARIATION NO.1 TO THE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT
PLAN 2024-2030**

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

Mr Eamon Brown, A/Director Community Development & Planning Services said that the report was an update in relation to the commitment by the former Director of Services, Mr Liam Ward to come back to members with an update on the proposed variation to the

County Development Plan. He said it had been agreed that there would be a further workshop in relation to same and that this was now scheduled for Wednesday 5th November.

C/385/25

TEN-T PRIORITY ROUTE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT DONEGAL

Mr Bryan Cannon, Director Roads & Transportation welcomed Mr Damian Mc Dermott, Senior Engineer, NRO to the meeting together with Ms Aine Mc Hugh, Senior Executive Engineer, NRO and Mr Brian Reid, Land Liaison Officer, NRO.

This was, he advised, a game changing project and one of the largest ever undertaken by Donegal County Council. The presentation today, he said, was an opportunity to update members as to where the project was heading, the details involved, and the next steps to be undertaken.

Ms Aine Mc Hugh, Senior Executive Engineer, outlined the criteria applicable for the development of the project, and the overall context for same. Detail was also provided in relation to the individual sections of the project namely:

- Section 1 – N15/N13 Ballybofey/Stranorlar Urban Region.
- Section 2 – N13 Letterkenny/Manorcunningham.
- Section 3.- N14 Manorcunningham to Lifford/ Strabane/A5 Link.

Mr Brian Reid, Land Liaison Officer, NRO advised on the position in relation to land and property acquisition and gave an update on the compulsory purchase order process to date. It was noted that 475 land/property owners were involved and that 1470 acres of land had to be acquired.

He confirmed that 34 residential properties were impacted together with 4 commercial and 5 uninhabited properties. There was acknowledgement also of the engagement and consultation that had taken place with a varied range of stakeholders.

Mr Damian Mc Dermott, Senior Engineer, gave an overview of the expected lifecycle of the project including the appraisal milestones and the projected completion cycles for the sections outlined above. He advised that this had been the first T.I.I. Project assessed under the new MPAG process with Donegal N.R.O leading out on the project. The outcome of this, he said had been that the project had demonstrated comprehensive robustness and had aligned with capital appraisal guidelines including the identification of environmental and climate assessment requirements. The MAJOR Projects Advisory Group had, he said, recommended the project as highly positive with an estimated cost range of €780 €915m and as an important national road project worthy of cabinet approval. The next major milestone, he advised, was the movement to the statutory phase and this was expected to commence in early 2026 and be completed by the end of 2027. The Phase 5 element encompassing the enablement and

procurement of the project was, he stated, scheduled to start in 2027 and be completed by the end of 2028. Construction of the project, he added, was expected to commence in 2028 and to be provisionally completed in 2032.

Members complimented the team on their achievements to date noting that the project would bring major change to the North -West Region impacting both the overall economic and social status of the region and address considerable infrastructural and accessibility deficits in the county. The meeting was opened to the floor and the following items raised:

- That a press statement needed to issue as soon as possible updating the public on the magnitude and benefits of the TEN-T Priority Route Project.
- Query as to when compensation would be paid in respect of lands/property acquired under the compulsory purchase process.
- General welcome for the plans to build a bridge over the River Swilly and the progression of the Bonagee Link.
- Project will help address concerns in relation to air quality in Ballybofey/Stranorlar area.
- Is the funding from EU Connect specifically for the Donegal TEN-T as opposed to the European TEN-T and are there any exceptions for an area in transition?
- Peripherality aspect must be continually flagged and outlined when making funding applications.
- Economic and social challenges in border areas need to be taken into consideration.
- Need to keep sight of the Inver to Killybegs project. Survey needed and a renewed effort made at national level to secure funding. Need to retain on the National Roads Project listing.
- N15 Road improvements must be completed in their entirety in the interest of road safety. Funding must be sought and upgrade works carried out, starting at Stranorlar and encompassing also the Corcam Bends.
- Knotweed and invasive vegetation will be a player going forward.

The Cathaoirleach thanked the NRO team for the presentation and noted that there had been significant engagement at ministerial level on both sides of the border. He said that environmental issues were going to be at the fore as the scheme progressed, especially the impact of invasive species and vegetation such as knotweed.

Mr Damian Mc Dermott, Senior Engineer, advised that it would be possible to do a press release on the scheme progress to date and confirmed that in relation to land agreements the normal processing time was three months to one year. He informed members that it was euro wide CEF funding that was being utilised for this project. Monies

had been, secured for the current year, he added, and additional funding would be sought going forward under this funding umbrella. The value for money aspect would be measured, he said, in terms of air quality and improvement of the safety aspect. Plans for dealing with invasive species were included in the overall masterplan, he noted.

Mr Bryan Cannon, Director Roads & Transportation paid tribute to all involved in the project, alluding specifically to the level of detail contained in the presentation. He said that the project would bring many benefits in the years ahead. The team, he said, would be available to deal with any queries and questions on the scheme itself and the land and property acquisitions.

The Chief Executive stated that the TEN-T was one of the most positive developments ever to take place in the county and acknowledged the fact that the NRO team involved had been working for significant time on the project. The was also reflected, he added, in the fact that T.I.I had been particularly complimentary of the work carried out by the Donegal NRO team. He acknowledged the fact that members had been supportive of the scheme and had actively engaged at every level of the process. He cited the need for a collaborative approach going forward and noted that the overall time factor for completion was outside of the control of the NRO office.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Cathaoirleach:_____

Dated:_____