

**Minutes of the Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Council Chamber, M-Tek Building, Armagh Rd, Knockaconny, Monaghan, on Monday 03 March 2025 at 10.00 a.m.**

**Chair:** Cllr P. Gibbons, Cathaoirleach

**Present:** Cllrs Aughey, Campbell, Carthy, Clerkin, P. Conlon, S. Conlon, Flynn, Gilliland, Keelan, McAree, McCooley, O'Hanlon, P. Treanor, S. Treanor and Truell

Mr. R. Burns, Chief Executive, Mr. C. Flynn, Ms. C O'Hare, Ms. P. Monahan, Ms. O. McConnon, Directors of Services, Mr. G. McMahon, A/Director of Services, Ms. M. McGarvey, Meetings Administrator, Ms. M. McMahon, Staff Officer

**MS Teams:** Cllr S. Coyle

**Apologies:** Cllr A. Johnston

**1. Confirmation of Council Meeting Minutes held on 10 February 2025**

*On the proposal of Cllr N. Keelan, seconded by Cllr R. Aughey, it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 10 February 2025 be confirmed.*

**2. Correspondence**

The following correspondence was circulated with the agenda for the meeting:

- Email from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Mr. James Browne, T.D., regarding water service connection fees.
- Acknowledgement email from the Office of An Taoiseach, Mr. Micheál Martin, T.D., regarding funding following Storm Éowyn.
- Acknowledgement email from the Office of An Taoiseach, Mr. Micheál Martin, T.D., regarding provision of funding for the local authority to survey, identify and remove trees that pose risk.
- Acknowledgement email from the Office of An Taoiseach, Mr. Micheál Martin, T.D., regarding urban and rural isolation.
- Acknowledgement email from the Office of An Taoiseach, Mr. Micheál Martin, T.D., regarding diaspora voting entitlements.
- Acknowledgement email from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Finance, Mr. Pascal Donohoe, T.D. regarding funding following Storm Éowyn.
- Acknowledgement email from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Transport, Mr. Darragh O'Brien, T.D., regarding provision of funding for the local authority to survey, identify and remove trees that pose risk.
- Resolution from Sligo County Council regarding the VAT rate on electricity costs.
- Resolution from Sligo County Council regarding the abolishment of Carbon Tax.
- Resolution from Sligo County Council regarding the implementation of an eviction ban.
- Resolution from Sligo County Council regarding electronic vaping.

**2.1 Additional Correspondence**

The following additional correspondence which had been received after the agenda had issued was also circulated:

- Email from the Private Secretary to Minister Mary Butler, Department of Health, with responsibility for Mental Health regarding funding for SOSAD.

### **Proposals arising out of correspondence:**

*On the proposal of Cllr R. Truell, seconded by Cllr P. Clerkin, it was agreed that this Council calls on the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) to reduce water connection fees for any new houses being built. The current rate of charges is not sustainable and completely unfair given that there are no alternative options available for water supply.*

*On the proposal of Cllr S. Flynn, seconded by Cllr P. Conlon, it was agreed that this Council supports the Sligo Co Co motion calling on the government to desist from increasing the V.A.T. rate from 9% to 13.5% on electricity costs that is planned to take effect from May 2025.*

*On the proposal of Cllr S. Flynn, seconded by Cllr P. Conlon, it was agreed that this Council supports the Sligo Co Co motion calling on the government to abolish any plans of introducing further carbon taxes for the foreseeable future.*

*On the proposal of Cllr N. McCooey, seconded by Cllr C. Carthy, it was agreed that this Council supports the Sligo Co Co motion calling on the Government to implement an eviction ban, only in cases where the tenant is abiding with the letting contract, that would protect both the Tenant and the Landlord. It is evident that this Government is incapable of delivering its own yearly housing targets and the number of families living in emergency accommodation is increasing by at least 16% per year with an estimated 4,000 children homeless in Ireland.*

*On the proposal of Cllr P. Clerkin, seconded by Cllr A. Campbell, it was agreed that this Council write to both the Minister for Mental Health and Older People and the HSE, calling on them to renew the SOSAD messaging service which is due to close on 4th March 2025. SOSAD offers a vital service to individuals suffering from poor mental health and it is crucial that all services are maintained, and funding is increased.*

### **3. To consider the Chief Executive's Report on Submissions received in respect of the Draft County Development Plan**

*The Cathaoirleach referred to the Chief Executive's report on the submissions received during the consultation period on the Draft County Development Plan 2025-2031. He highlighted that the elected members are obliged to consider the proper planning and sustainable development of the county and stated that, in accordance with Section 177 of the Local Government Act 2001, where an individual has a conflict of interest in respect of a particular submission, portion of land, or a matter being discussed, that conflict should be declared and the individual should vacate the chamber for the period of the related discussion and abstain from any associated vote. He concluded by referring to the process for consideration of resolutions that had been agreed by the Cathaoirleach, party leaders and Cllr S. Treanor when they met with representatives from the Planning Section on 21 February 2025.*

*Mr. A. Hughes, Senior Planner then gave a presentation to the members. He outlined the stages involved to date in the preparation of the draft Development Plan. He explained that, in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) 'Where, following the consideration of the draft development plan and the Chief Executive's Report, it appears to the members of the authority that the draft plan should be accepted or amended, subject to subsection (7), they may, by resolution, accept or amend the draft and make the development plan accordingly. Mr. Hughes then proceeded with the consideration of the following five proposed resolutions to amend the draft Monaghan County Development Plan*

2025-2031:

*Cllr R. Aughey declared an interest in submissions MN-C22-MCDP-33 and MN-C22-MCDP-108 and withdrew from the meeting room.*

**Submission Ref – MN-C22-MCDP-33**

*Cllr S. Coyle proposed, Cllr B. McAree seconded that the lands in the Coolshannagh area identified in submission MN-C22-MCDP-33 as Landscape Protection/Conservation (LPC) and Existing Commercial (EC), be zoned as Industry/Enterprise/Employment (IEE).*

The reasons given in the written proposal were;

- The subject lands are conveniently located adjacent to the existing public roads, offering direct access to the National Road network which has adequate capacity for any traffic generated from commercial uses. It is a strategically well-located site.
- There are no landscape qualities or natural heritage features existing on these lands.
- A risk of flooding does not preclude the development of lands.
- A significant portion of the lands is not exposed to flood risk as the ground levels rise significantly above the river and flood plain levels.
- The majority of the lands can be developed outside of a flood plain and for the portions of the site that remain within the flood plain a design solution can be found.

Mr. A. Hughes in response to the proposal stated that the lands identified in submission MN-C22-MCDP-33, are mostly greenfield lands located to the north of Monaghan Town. He stated that they were proposed to be zoned as existing commercial, industry/enterprise/employment, and landscape protection/conservation in the draft Development Plan.

He advised that the submission had been accompanied by a Planning Statement and a Flood Risk Assessment, both of which acknowledged that a portion of the subject lands were at flood risk.

Mr. Hughes stated that the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment which had been prepared by McCloy's Consulting for the Planning Authority, also confirmed that a portion of the lands were at flood risk. He advised that this opinion was based on CFRAM data, and as such is the highest degree confidence of flood data used.

He confirmed that the portion of lands which were identified as being at flood risk closely aligned to that area which was proposed to be zoned as landscape protection/conservation in the draft Development Plan.

Mr. Hughes referred to the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines, and stated that they advised that lands at flood risk should not be zoned for development without justification, and that none had been provided.

In conclusion, Mr. Hughes stated that the lands were in part at flood risk, and to make this change in zoning would be contrary to the recommendations of the OPR and Flood Risk Guidelines. Mr. Hughes recommend that the members should not proceed with the resolution.

A vote by show of hands resulted in, 9 For, 7 Against and 1 Abstention.

The Cathaoirleach declared the proposal carried.

**Submission Ref – MN-C22-MCDP-108**

*Cllr S. Conlon proposed, Cllr PJ O’Hanlon seconded to add the following text at paragraph 10.6 (Monaghan Town Settlement Plan – Retailing) of the draft Monaghan County Development Plan 2025 – 2031:*

*“The Council recognises the long-term vacancy at Monaghan Retail Park which must be addressed. It is an objective of the Council to support new retail in the Park.”*

*It is also proposed to amend Table 9.3 (Land Use Zoning Matrix) as indicated below.*

Development Type	TC	ER	PR	SR	IE	EC	CS	RA	LPC
Retail (Convenience)	√	O	O	O	X	O*	X	X	X
Retail (Comparison)	√	X	X	X	X	O*	X	X	X

*\*Retail (Convenience) and Retail Comparison) are acceptable in principle at the Monaghan Retail Park.*

**Reason:**

- The current retail park has a 45% vacancy and at present there are 5 unoccupied and vacant units in the Retail Park. This has been a consistent long-term problem since it opened 20 years ago.
- Job Creation and Vacancy are not mutually exclusive. Addressing vacancy in Monaghan town in general will create jobs. Monaghan Retail Park has a majority of units in vacancy and a list of retailers that want to lease space in the centre.
- Convenience and comparison retail should be a fundamental part of a wider Retail Hierarchy, which is Monaghan Town (the main county town) should include Neighbourhood level, convenience retail with appropriate attending services.

In support of the proposal, Cllr S Conlon stated that the Retail Park had been in existence for 20 years and that he initially would have agreed with the recommendation of the planners to limit its retail offering. He stated that he felt that the town centre had reached capacity in terms of retail and referenced traffic congestion in the town centre.

Cllr S. Treanor stated that out-of-town shopping had always been rejected in the time of Monaghan Town Council. Cllr Treanor advised that in other towns in the region which had out-of-town shopping, that town centre dereliction could be seen.

Cllr PJ O’Hanlon stated that Monaghan Town had Dunnes Stores, SuperValu, Tesco, Lidl and soon Aldi. He stated that no more grocery multiples would be coming to the town. He stated that he would support the proposal if it meant other parts of the retail sector coming to town.

Cllr S. Gilliland asked that if the resolution was successful and a planning application was submitted, how that would align to national policy.

In response, Mr. Hughes stated that the members would be familiar with the proposal, as similar had been considered during the preparation of previous development plans. He advised that it was the

intent of the resolution to facilitate the sale of convenience and comparison goods (grocery and clothing) at the Retail Park, which was located approximately 1.5 km from the town centre.

Mr. Hughes outlined the planning history relating to the site, stating that planning permission had been granted for a retail park at this location, and that it was restricted by condition to the sale of bulky goods only.

He advised that a number of planning applications had been submitted in relation to the park, to allow for the sale of convenience/comparison goods, but that these had been refused permission by the Planning Authority, two of which were refused on appeal to An Bord Pleanala. He advised that these applications had been refused on both local and national retail planning policy.

Mr. Hughes referred to the national Retail Planning Guidelines, which he stated did not generally permit the sale of retail items such as groceries or clothing in out-of-town centre locations. He highlighted that regardless of the passing of an amendment to the land use zoning matrix in respect of the retail park in Monaghan Town, that the national planning guidelines would still be applied to future planning applications.

Mr. Hughes stated that Monaghan County Council was carrying out significant work in relation to regeneration in Monaghan Town, including the development of opportunity sites for town centre uses. He indicated that the sale of grocery and clothing in an out-of-town centre location would fly in the face of this.

Mr. Hughes recommended that the members should not proceed with the resolution.

A recorded vote was taken which resulted as follows:

**For:** Cllrs C. Carthy, S. Conlon, S. Coyle, N. Keelan, PJ O’Hanlon, P. Treanor, N. McCooey, S. Flynn, B. McAree and P. Gibbons

**Total: 10**

**Against:** Cllrs A. Campbell, S. Gilliland, P. Conlon, S. Treanor, R. Truell and P. Clerkin

**Total: 6**

**Abstention:** Cllr. R. Aughey

**Total: 1**

The Cathaoirleach declared the proposal carried.

**Submission Ref – MN-C22-MCDP-53**

*Cllr R. Aughey proposed, Cllr S. Treanor seconded that the lands identified in submission MN-C22-MCDP-53 at Drumbear which were zoned as Residential A in the draft Plan, and subsequently recommended to be zoned as Strategic Residential Reserve in the Chief Executive’s Report, be zoned as Residential A. Also, at Drumbear, the lands that were zoned as Residential B in the draft Plan and subsequently recommended to be zoned as Strategic Residential Reserve in the Chief Executive’s Report, be zoned as Residential B with the exception of those lands which are Landscape/Conservation Protection as identified in the Chief Executive’s Report. Furthermore, it is proposed that part of the lands MT9, which are identified in Appendix 16 Infrastructure Assessment and Settlement Capacity Audit (SCA) of the Draft Monaghan County Development Plan 2025-2031 as Residential A and B, be zoned as Strategic Residential Reserve.*

**Reason:**

- The proposal will not result in an increase in the quantity of lands zoned for residential use from that proposed in the amended Core Strategy set out in the Chief Executives Report.
- The proposal will provide a balanced distribution of residential sites within Monaghan Town.
- The lands MT9 have been zoned Residential A and B in the last 3 Development Plans and have not yet come to the market or delivered housing. The Development Plan Guidelines state, 'It is also best practice that in cases where land is zoned and has remained undeveloped and un-serviced through one or more development plan cycles, with no prospect of being serviced within the six-year life of the development plan that is under preparation, alternative approaches must be considered:- (i) alternative zoning objectives or (ii) discontinuing the objective (See Appendix A)'. As such it is proposed to rezone the existing lands from residential A and B to SRR.

Mr. Hughes stated that the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities directs local authorities to adopt a sequential approach to the zoning of land and to identify & prioritise lands for zoning on a sequential basis. He advised the members that as the proposed amendment would conflict with the Development Plan Guidelines that the recommendation was not to rezone the lands in question as per the resolution.

A vote by show of hands resulted in 17 For and nil against. The Cathaoirleach declared the proposal carried.

**Submission Ref – MN-C22-MCDP-69**

*Cllr P. Treanor proposed, Cllr R. Truell seconded that the lands identified in draft Plan submission MN-C22-MCDP-69 be rezoned from Landscape Protection/Conservation to Residential B and to rezone part of the lands CL 25 which are identified in Appendix 16 Infrastructure Assessment and Settlement Capacity Audit Maps (SCA) of the Draft Monaghan County Development Plan 2025-2031 - from Residential A and B to Strategic Residential Reserve (SRR).*

**Reason:**

- The proposal will not result in an increase in the quantity of lands zoned for Residential A or B from that proposed in the amended Core Strategy set out in the Chief Executive Report.
- The proposal will provide a balanced distribution of residential sites within Clones Town.
- The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment does not indicate that these lands are subject to a Flood Zone.
- The lands CL 25 have been zoned Residential A and B in the last 3 Development Plans and have not yet come to the market or delivered housing. The Development Plan Guidelines state, 'It is also best practice that in cases where land is zoned and has remained undeveloped and un-serviced through one or more development plan cycles, with no prospect of being serviced within the six-year life of the development plan that is under preparation, alternative approaches must be considered:- (i) alternative zoning objectives or (ii) discontinuing the objective (See Appendix A)'. As such it is proposed to rezone the existing lands identified as CL 25 from residential A and B to Strategic Residential Reserve.

Mr. A. Hughes stated that as per the previous resolution, the proposed amendment would conflict with the national Development Plan Guidelines, therefore the recommendation was not to rezone the lands in question.

A vote by show of hands resulted in 17 For and Nil Against. The Cathaoirleach declared the

proposal carried.

**Submission Ref – MN-C22-MCDP-141**

*Cllr PJ O’Hanlon proposed, Cllr R. Aughey seconded that the 100m rule which is applied in Chapter 15 Development Management Standards at Section 15.9.5 Residential Dwellings and Agricultural Buildings namely Policy DABP 1 is removed in its entirety and all of the text contained within this section be removed.*

**Reason:** The removal of the 100m rule would:

- Support and allow the continued growth of our rural population.
- Support rural communities, schools, localised services and clubs.
- Not prohibit those people in local areas who are landowners who want their children/relatives to reside in the area but cannot develop or build houses because of adjoining farm holdings and the 100m rule.

In support of the proposal, Cllr PJ O’Hanlon stated that because of this policy some people who wished to live in the country were being forced to live in towns. He stated that this rule did not apply in the other 25 counties. He also stated that he was making this proposal to support local schools, community growth and the maintenance of localised services in rural areas.

Cllr Aughey stated that he had no issue with rural landowners wanting to have their family beside them.

In response, Mr. Hughes stated that the 100m rule had been introduced on foot of a proposal by an elected member in 2007, to protect the agricultural sector, having regards to the significant and important role that it played in the county. He noted that the issue of concern then, had been people outside the holding buying land and constructing adjacent housing, and that it was considered that letters of agreement should be sought in those circumstances. He added that the 100m figure was not an arbitrary one but related to agricultural exempted development rights. He concluded by stating that farmers could lose rights if there was a residence located within 100m of their farmyard.

A recorded vote was taken which resulted as follows:

**For:** Cllrs R. Aughey, PJ O’Hanlon, S. Treanor and S. Coyle

**Total: 4**

**Against:** Cllrs A. Campbell, C. Carthy, P. Clerkin, P. Conlon, S. Conlon, S. Flynn, P. Gibbons, S. Gilliland, N. Keelan, B. McAree, N. McCooey, P. Treanor and R. Truell

**Total: 13**

The Cathaoirleach declared the proposal defeated.

The Chief Executive’s recommendation was agreed.

*Cllrs R. Aughey, S. Gilliland and A. Campbell declared an interest in the adoption of the amendments to the Draft County Development Plan 2025-2031 and therefore withdrew from the meeting room.*

*Having considered the Draft Development Plan and the Chief Executive’s Report, Cllr P. Treanor proposed, Cllr. P. Clerkin seconded, to amend the draft plan accordingly and make the County*

*Development Plan 2025-2031.*

*A vote by show of hands resulted in 14 For and 3 Abstentions.*

In terms of next steps, Mr. Hughes informed the members that the agreed material alterations to the draft plan would now undergo public consultation. Following the public consultation a further Chief Executive's report on submissions received would be prepared for members consideration in May 2025, possibly at a special meeting.

Mr. Hughes thanked all members and staff involved in the Draft Development Plan process.

The Cathaoirleach thanked all involved in the process.

The Chief Executive also thanked the Council members for their co-operation during the process and also, A. Hughes, T. Gourley, M. McKearney and the Planning team for all of their input.

Mr. Hughes, on behalf of the Planning Section, thanked the Cathaoirleach, Members and the Chief Executive for their comments.

**4. To consider Part VIII for the conservation and refurbishment of the Ballybay Market House to a Public Library and Community Space**

Mr. A. Hughes referred to the Part VIII report which had been circulated in respect of proposed works including an extension and hard landscaping for the conservation and refurbishment of Ballybay Market House to a Public Library and Community Space. He advised that no submissions had been received during the public consultation period.

*On the proposal of Cllr S. Gilliland, seconded by Cllr S. Flynn, it was agreed to approve the works including the extension and hard landscaping for the conservation and refurbishment of Ballybay Market House to a Public Library and Community Space, as detailed in the Chief Executive's Report prepared in accordance with Part VIII of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).*

**5. To Note the "Re-Imagining Monaghan - St Louis Convent and Grounds Option Paper"**

Mr. D. Hurley, Senior Executive Engineer, Town Regeneration gave a presentation to the members on the "Re-imagining Monaghan – St. Louis Convent and Grounds Option Paper", circulated with the Agenda. He stated that funding of €200k had been secured under THRIVE 2, an EU funded stream for; the development of a Heritage Plan; development of Integrated Plan, and the development of an Options Paper relating to Monaghan Town. He advised that J. McLaughlin Architects had been appointed to develop the documents and that there had been various public consultation exercises held over two phases. He advised the members that in the first phase of public consultation, which focused on 'Visioning for the Town' 120 individuals were met with and 15 community groups were engaged with. The second phase of consultation took place in November and focused on the Development of a Town Centre First Plan/Options Paper for St. Louis Lands and a Heritage Town Plan. During the second phase of public consultation, 61 submissions were received on an online portal and 150 individuals attended an open day.

He provided the members with an overview of the proposed building uses within the St. Louis Convent Ground Option Paper, key points to note were:



- It is proposed that the St. Louis Chapel building will become a vibrant cultural hub in the heart of Monaghan Town, providing; arts and culture space; performance space; community activity and teaching space.
- The ground floor of the Nursing home could be converted to a visitor hub and upper floors developed as affordable visitor accommodation.
- The former Heritage Building has been deemed suitable for social housing – supported accommodation, possibly for older people who could benefit from the parkland setting. The ground floor could be reserved for community use, such as, a creche or shared use by residents.
- Possible uses of the Former Primary School include conversion to a community centre to facilitate various community groups such as, Monaghan Tidy Towns Committee or the provision of day care services for the HSE.
- The three terraced houses on site are to be retained as residential dwellings.

Mr. Hurley advised that the next stages of the project include, seeking funding of approx.. €500k from under the outdoor recreation funding stream for the development of the parkland area, preparation of the Part VII application and the submission of an application to the NWRA for THRIVE 2 funding by May 2025.

Mr. C. Flynn, Director of Services, highlighted that the project is at the very early stages of development/options appraisal, and he reassured the members that they would be consulted at each and every decision-making stage.

The members thanked Mr. D. Hurley for his presentation and conveyed their gratitude to the Town and Regeneration Team for their input.

Members noted the “Re-imagining Monaghan – St. Louis Convent and Grounds Option Paper”, as circulated.

## 6. To consider recommendations for Arts Partners Funding Scheme

The members considered the report from the Arts Officer recommending the allocation of grants under the Arts Partners Funding Scheme 2025. The Arts Officer responded to members’ queries.

*On the proposal of Cllr S. Conlon, seconded by Cllr N Keelan, it was agreed that the Council approve the allocation of the following grants under the Arts Partnership Grant 2025:*

	<b>Arts Partners Grant Recommended Applicants</b>	<b>Amount Awarded</b>
1	Castleblayney Drama Festival	€ 3,500
2	Féile Patrick Byrne	€ 8,000
3	Íontas Theatre	€ 23,000
4	Clones Film Festival	€ 13,000
5	The Garage Theatre	€ 21,000
6	N/East Musical & Dramatic Society	€ 3,500
7	Muckno Mania	€ 3,000

	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€ 75,000</b>
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**7. To consider recommendations for Artist's Bursary Support scheme**

The members considered the report from the Arts Officer recommending the allocation of grants under the Artist's Bursary Support Scheme 2025. The Arts Officer responded to members queries.

*On the proposal Cllr S. Flynn seconded by Cllr S. Conlon it was agreed that the Council approve the allocation of the following grants under the Artist's Bursary Support Scheme 2025:*

**Emerging Talent - €600 each**

**\* 1<sup>st</sup> time recipient**

	<b>Applicants</b>	<b>Art Form</b>
1	Justine Cappelli*	Visual Artist/Mixed Media
2	Peter Trant *	Playwright/Theatre
3	Nicola McKenna *	Abstract/Intuitive/Visual Art
4	Andrea Soto	Visual Artist
5	Emma Hurson*	Visual Artist/Researcher
		<b>Total € 3,000</b>

**Established Artists - €1,000 each**

	<b>Applicants</b>	<b>Art Form</b>
1	Niamh McPhillips	Theatre
2	Paul McCloskey	Visual Artist/Painter
3	Ben Reel	Musician
4	Rory Pierce	Composer/Performer
5	Jonathan Hughes	Film
6	Orlagh Meegan Gallagher	Visual Artist
7	Denise McCabe	Contemporary Artist (V.A)
8	Emily McGardle	Printmaker
9	Joanne Behan	Sculpture/Visual Artist
10	Declan Gorman	Theatre Practitioner
11	Danielle Carragher(dani larkin)	Singer Songwriter
12	Eileen Ferguson	Painter/Printmaker
13	Fiona Longmuir	Author/ Children's Books
14	Fiona Marron	Visual Artist
15	Siobhan McDonald	Visual Artist/Mixed Media

**8. To approve the Draft Annual Service Delivery Plan 2025**

Ms. M. McGarvey, A/Senior Executive Officer, outlined the main elements of the Annual Service Delivery Plan (ASDP) for 2025, which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting. She stated that the plan, which had been prepared in accordance with the Local Government Reform Act, 2014 and in conjunction with the Draft Corporate Plan 2024-2029, identifies the services that the Council intends to provide to the public in the year ahead. She further stated that the Plan, which reflected the provisions of Budget 2025, sets out the objectives and priorities for each department; the strategies for achieving those objectives and the priorities and performance standards intended to be met. She acknowledged the contribution of all staff and Directors in the preparation of the plan.

*On the proposal Cllr R. Aughey seconded by Cllr P. Treanor it was agreed that the Draft Annual Service Delivery Plan for 2025 as circulated, be approved.*

**9. Tuarascail Bhliantuil - Coiste na Gaeilge**

An tUasal Nial Ó Conchúir, Oifigeach Gaeilge outlined the work of the Coiste Gaeilge during 2024 and thanked them for their help and support. He stated that the Coiste aims to promote the use of the Irish language in Co Monaghan as well as insuring that the Council fulfils its obligations under the Official Languages Act.

He highlighted Coiste's activities during 2024:

1. The Coiste held 4 meetings.
2. The Coiste organised a concert for Nollaig na mBan and Seachtain na Gaeilge.
3. 37 scholarships were awarded to students to attend the Gaeltacht.
4. The Coiste supported the County Fleadh and an outdoor céilí was held in Scotstown.
5. The Coiste supported Muineachán le Gaeilge to run Campaí Sproai, which is an Irish language summer camp.
6. 18 groups availed of grants to hold events during Seachtain na Gaeilge.

He concluded by stating that in 2025 the Coiste hope to continue their good work and ensure the Council complies fully with the Official Languages Act.

**10. To consider recommendations and minutes from Corporate Policy Group 19 February 2025**

The members noted the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 19 February 2025, which had been circulated.

*On the proposal of Cllr S. Conlon, seconded by Cllr C. Carthy, it was agreed that the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 19 February 2025 and the recommendations contained therein be approved.*

**11. To receive Management Report – February 2025**

The Chief Executive informed the members of an update since the issue of the Management Report, in relation to the Affordable Housing Scheme which had received formal notice of approval for the Station View area of Monaghan Town on Friday 28 February 2025. He stated that the Council had received a high level of funding for the ten-house scheme, comprising of two- and three-bedroom units and added that the Scheme would be advertised and promoted in the coming weeks with an online portal being launched for the submission of applications.

He commended the Housing Team for the huge volume of work involved in reaching this significant milestone.

The Chief Executive introduced the Management Report for February 2025 which had been circulated with the agenda. He referred to the joint campaign between the Council and the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) to ensure that landlords register their tenancies. He stated that Central Statistics Office research last year suggested that 10.9% of tenancies in Monaghan that should be registered with RTB were not. He advised that the campaign would involve the Council working closely with RTB to increase landlord awareness of the need to register tenancies annually and highlight the consequences of failure to register.

The Chief Executive concluded by referring to the 5-year Roads Maintenance Strategy that is being prepared by the Transportation Section. He stated that the strategy would employ an empirical, data-led approach to road maintenance with the aim of targeting investment in the road network with short-, medium-, and long-term measures to restore the road network to an acceptable steady state.

The members noted the Management Report for February 2025 which had been circulated with the agenda.

The members conveyed their gratitude to Ms. O. McConnon and the Housing Team for their input in the Affordable Housing Scheme. They also conveyed thanks to Ms. Marcella Carey for the exemplary way in which she carries out her role and wished Ms. Siobhán Toal well in her new role in the Housing Grants department.

The Chief Executive and Directors of Services responded to queries from the elected members.

*On behalf of the members of the Speed Limits Committee, Cllr R. Aughey proposed, Cllrs N. McCooey and P. Gibbons jointly seconded, that the current rural default 60km per hour speed limit zone along local primary roads, L3444, L3443, L3442, L3441 and L3440 between Clontibret and Castleblayney be increased to a 80km per hour special speed limit zone.*

**12. To receive reports from Members attending Conferences/Training events**

The members noted the report from Cllrs S. Coyle, N. Keelan and S. Conlon, in relation to their attendance at the following Conferences/Training events:

- LAMA - Spring Seminar, 30 & 31 January 2025, Kilford Arms, Kilkenny.
- AIR – Annual Training Seminar, 05 & 06 February 2025, Raddison Blu Hotel, Athlone.
- Celtic Conference – Corporate Governance, 07,08 & 09 February 2025, O'Donovan's Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork.

**13. Business Submitted by the Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive informed the members there was no matters for consideration under this item.

**14. Matters arising out of the minutes of the Council meetings held on 10 February 2025**

It was agreed that the party leaders would give consideration to the invitation from Fort Augustus Irish Descendants, Prince Edward Island in relation to agreeing a delegation to attend the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Benevolent Irish Society Celebrations from 1st to 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2025 and update the executive accordingly.

**15. To receive update on N2 National Primary Road Schemes**

Mr. G. McMahon, A/Director of Services, informed the members that the initial design for the N2 Clontibret to the Border Road Scheme was nearing completion and meetings with approximately 200 land and property owners that are directly affected by the project are scheduled to begin on the 31<sup>st</sup> March, running for three weeks (Monday to Thursday from 10am until 8pm) with a venue being arranged in Monaghan Town. He stated that the Jacobs project team would write out to the landowners in the coming weeks, inviting them to make an appointment to meet a member of the project team. At each meeting, landowners will receive, a copy of the proposed design at their location, a map showing the proposed landtake and an engineer will explain the elements of the proposed road, why certain design decisions were made and they can discuss the extent of the land to be acquired. Any feedback provided will be considered by Jacobs before a design is finalised later in the year. He stated that Jacobs hope to meet some of the most impacted landowners during the first day of the meetings to make sure they receive accurate information directly from a member of the project team.

Mr. G. McMahon advised that an in-person briefing session would be held at the venue in Monaghan Town for TDs, Oireachtas Members and Councillors in County Monaghan, on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 at 6pm.

**16. To receive update on North/South Interconnector project**

The following correspondence was received in relation to the North south Interconnector project:

- Letter from Mr. Martin Corrigan, Chief Executive, Eirgrid, regarding the North South Interconnector project.
- Acknowledgement email from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications, Mr. Darragh O'Brien, T.D., regarding the North South Interconnector project.

The following additional correspondence was received in relation to the North south Interconnector project:

- Letter from Mr. Michael Mahon, Chief Infrastructure Officer, Eirgrid, regarding the North South Interconnector project.

*On the proposal of Cllr N. Keelan, seconded by Cllr S. Flynn, it was agreed that, given Eirgrid's stated intention to press ahead with an application for the compulsory acquisition or use of an easement or other rights for access over lands, which has the potential for conflict and confrontation within farming and local communities affected by the NSI proposal, this Council writes to the Oireachtas members of this constituency requesting that an intervention with the line minister Darragh O'Brien TD, and Government be made in advance of such an application, for the purpose of avoiding at all costs conflict and confrontation with the communities affected by the pylon supported NSI proposal which has no community acceptance.*

**17. To receive update on the Ulster Canal project**

No further update on the Ulster Canal project.

## 18. Questions and Replies

**Clr C. Carthy will ask:**

1. What is the latest up-to-date situation with the Clois na Droimainne unfinished Housing estate in Carrickmacross and what measures are MCC taking to expedite the delivery of the 4-bed units and either the delivery or demolition of the unfinished apartment block which has been an eyesore in the town for a long time?

**Reply: Monaghan County Council is currently in discussions with the developer of this estate to identify and evaluate the various options available to the Council to ensure the completion of this project**

2. When is it expected the roads review of Co. Monaghan, which is hoped to deliver a 5-year programme of works to roads in urgent need of resurfacing/repair, expected to be concluded?

**Reply: Monaghan County Council is currently working to deliver the 3-year roads programmes agreed at Municipal District level in 2024, however work is also progressing in the background to develop a 2025 – 2030 Pavement Maintenance Strategy which aims to review how resources are allocated and which roads are prioritised. The Strategy will be developed in consultation with stakeholders, including the SPC, CPG and the Council, and it is hoped to have it adopted by the end of 2025 for implementation from 2026. Where practical, small-scale interventions that may form part of the strategy may be brought to the Council for approval to implement in 2025.**

3. Following on from the February meeting of MCC and the decision by the CE to look at the introduction of a Council 'Tree Policy'; can the executive outline a timeline for the introduction of this policy (including which Director will oversee it, which SPC will carry out the review and the Terms of Reference expected)?

**Reply: The Biodiversity Officer has applied for funding (€10K) under the Local Biodiversity Action Fund to commission a Tree Policy for Monaghan County Council. The timeframe for this project will realistically be end of August (receiving confirmation of funding, securing a suitably qualified consultant, liaising with Climate Action & Environment SPC to agree scope; drafting the Tree Policy; review and launch). It will be overseen by DoS Patricia Monahan. Terms of Reference may include Aims & Objectives; Scope; Tree Management; Tree Maintenance; Diseases; Responsibilities and Governance; Procedures & Guidelines; Legislation & Compliance; Risk Management & Safety; Stakeholder Engagement.**

4. Has this executive any plans to seek a larger space to provide a 'youth café' in Carrickmacross owing to the high volume of young people and only limited outlets available? Also, will this council consider introducing an outdoor space for teenagers and young adults with partial shelter to allow them to gather in a secure environment?

**Reply: The executive is exploring the provision of facilities for teenagers and young adults, including a youth café, in Carrickmacross Town within the context of a number of strategic enabling plans/projects currently in development. These plans/projects include Carrickmacross Workhouse Community, Tourism and Arts Hub, Gallows Hill Greenspace Masterplan, and the Convent Lands Landscape Concept Masterplan.**

5. When is it expected a committee will be set up, with input from elected representatives, to progress the Carrickmacross Swimming Pool project?

**Reply: S3 Solutions have completed the Feasibility Study and Strategic Assessment Report for the proposed Swimming Pool project which was presented the Carrickmacross-Castleblayney MD Elected Members in January 2025. The project is now progressing to the next stage, preliminary business case development. The swimming pool proposal is currently in the very early stages of the project lifecycle and therefore the Executive feel the establishment of a project committee to be premature at this stage. A project**

committee can be considered at a future stage in the project development.

**Cllr S. Flynn will ask:**

6. In relation to the Energy Efficiency Retrofit programme, can Monaghan County Council please confirm the number of social housing properties due for upgrade in 2025 and whether there will be consultation with Government in relation to the installation of heat pumps following challenges and difficulties faced by many, as a result of recent power outages.

**Reply: The target set by the Department of Housing under the Energy Efficiency Retrofit programme for 2025 is 101. Monaghan County Council consults regularly with the Department of Housing in relation to the Energy Efficiency Retrofit programme. The issue of power outages affects all forms of central heating systems including, heat pumps, oil fired boilers, gas fired boilers and solid fuel heating systems with circulation pumps.**

7. Under Monaghan County Council Housing Capital works planned for 2025.
- (a) What is the projected number of new houses to be built in 2025 and where?
  - (b) What budget is expected to be spent on these projects?
  - (c) With a demand for one and two bedroom ground level homes, what plans have Monaghan County Council to increase supply for these types of homes?

**Reply: In 2025 Monaghan County Council's projections are to deliver 87 new social homes in County Monaghan as part of the Housing for All program. The target set by the Department of Housing is 63 for 2025. Please see Table below for number of units, location and delivery breakdown. The sizes of units to be completed are as follows; 1 or 2-bedrooms 48%, 3 bedrooms 49% and 4 bedrooms 2%. The projected cost is €27million in 2025 funded through the Housing for All programme by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The projected number to be delivered excludes individual house purchases and excludes Mortgage to Rent. Monaghan County Council is set to exceed the Department target by 38 percent. Monaghan County Council is already supplying significant one and 2-bedroom dwellings in 2025 as detailed in table below and this will continue in 2026 and 2027 with other developments such as the redevelopment of the Old Fire station in Castleblayney and Slí Lorcáin in Monaghan town.**

Housing For All 2025				Delivery Date	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	4 Bedroom
Monaghan	Cnoc na Greine, Tydavnet (Phase 2 of 8 units)	MCC	4	Q2 2025		4	
Carrickmacross - Castleblayney	Coill an Rí, Carrickmacross	MCC	13	Q2 2025	10	3	
Carrickmacross - Castleblayney	Sean Ghairdíní, Carrickmacross Part V	MCC	4	Q2 2025	2	2	
Carrickmacross - Castleblayney	Radhairc An Bhrí, Bree, Castleblayney (Phase 2)	AHB	9	Q3 2025		9	
Monaghan	Cois Abhainn, Ballinode	MCC	22	Q4 2025	9	11	2
Monaghan	Turnkey Monaghan Town (Including Affordable, Social & Part V)	MCC	14	Q4 2025	6	8	
Monaghan	Slí Na Coille, Monaghan	MCC	21	Q4 2025	15	6	
			<b>PROJECTED TOTAL:</b>	<b>87</b>			

*These figures do not include individual acquisitions and mortgage to rent properties.*

**Cllr P. Gibbons will ask:**

8. Have the Executive any plans to submit funding proposals for a new playground in the Carrickmacross Castleblayney MD in the year ahead? **Reply: The executive has no immediate plans to submit funding proposals for a new playground in the Carrickmacross-Castleblayney Municipal District. The executive is currently examining the feasibility of providing a new centrally located playpark for residents in Rosevale, Plás an Bhrí, Knocktornagh, and Coill Darach in Castleblayney. Similarly, in Carrickmacross, the provision of new playground facilities is being examined within the context of the development of the Gallows Hill Greenspace Masterplan. Subject to the outcome of these assessments, the executive shall endeavour to avail of relevant funding opportunities as they arise.**

9. The N2 Ardee to Castleblayney road scheme is suspended for the foreseeable future. Have the Council, in conjunction with TII, any plans to improve safety on this very busy and dangerous stretch of road?

**Reply:** Candidate sites along the national road network for potential road safety intervention measures are identified by TII using the Network Safety Analysis process. Currently, no High Collision Locations have been identified along the N2 between Castleblayney and Ardee. However, MCC have carried out surveys at the Tullyvaragh Junction and are currently preparing a report, recommending works at this location. It is likely that third party land acquisition may be required to facilitate works. On completion of a detailed design, approval will be sought from TII to implement the proposed solution.

10. There are 11 bungalows under construction at Radharc an Bhri, Castleblayney. Can timelines be provided on the estimated completion date of this development?

**Reply:** There are 9 bungalows currently under construction in Radharc an Bhri which are due for completion before the end of 2025.

11. Can details be provided on new initiatives being developed by the Executive to promote tourism in Castleblayney and the surrounding area?

**Reply:** Cunnane Stratton Reynolds have recently been appointed to develop a Masterplan for Lough Muckno and this will be progressed over the coming year. The Tourism Unit continues to promote the overall county as a tourism destination via Video/Photo Content, social media, influencer and travel journalist engagement, website, blogs, advertisements and outside broadcasts. The Unit has recently advertised tourism festival funding opportunities to support key festivals around the county.

12. Can details be provided on plans being developed by the Executive for the provision of additional sporting facilities in Castleblayney and the surrounding area?

**Reply:** A new funding stream, entitled Participation Nation Fund was announced by Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media in 2024 to support the provision of 'barrier-free' outdoor sport on publicly owned lands

As a result, funding has been allocated by Sport Ireland (as the conduit for the funding) for the provision of a 3v3 Outdoor Basketball Court and equipment locker at Lough Muckno. The project is currently being scoped in relation to specification required for costs and works and is expected to be progressed by end Q1.

**Cllr A. Campbell will ask:**

13. With Monaghan County Councils project on water quality in Lough Muckno "Lough Muckno Road to Recovery" now in its final stage.

(a) What have the main findings of this project been?

**Reply:** The main aims of the Lough Muckno Road to Recovery Project were;

- 1) To get a realistic timeframe for lake recovery times and
- 2) Identify the areas currently contributing the significant loads of nutrients to Lough Muckno.

The Lough Muckno Road to Recovery project is a unique project which investigated not only the current loadings of nutrients to the lake, but which also assessed the nutrients which exist in the lake sediment. The main factor which makes the project unique is this assessment of the lake sediment and how they are influencing current water quality. Currently Water Framework Directive Status does not include lake sediment analysis in water quality status determination or to set the environmental objectives for recovery and as a result the contribution of nutrients from the lake sediment remains the unknown factor for a lot of lakes.



Hydrec Environmental were the consultant appointed to carry out the study, the local interest and enthusiasm of the consultant was notable throughout the project. Scientists from the Ryan Institute from the University of Galway, Trinity College Dublin, and Professor Chen from Yunnan University in China also assisted with the project.

The main findings of the project were:

- Total Phosphorus (TP) concentrations in Lough Muckno have been in excess of EQS (Good Status) for each of the 3 basins in the lake since 2007.
  - The 18-month lake monitoring programme found that Internal phosphorus loading was occurring within the lough from the lake sediment, which will hinder lake recovery after the external loading is sufficiently reduced.
  - Pre famine phosphorus concentrations of the Lough were found to be in the Good Status Range.
  - The external load part of the project found that the orthophosphate concentrations required for good status rivers was exceeded in 2023 in the Gentle Owens Stream, County Water, Toome Stream & Drumacon Stream.
  - The study calculated the phosphorus load reductions required in the inputting tributaries.
  - The study indicates that even after the external loads of phosphorus have been reduced sufficiently, given the contribution from the lake sediment, it will take a minimum period of 12 years for improvements in water quality.
- (b) What plans has Monaghan County Council now to improve the water quality of Lough Muckno?
- Lough Muckno has been included as a Priority Area for Action in Ireland's 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle River basin Management Plan (2022-2027) which was published in September 2024. Work is underway at a national and regional level to develop catchment management workplans for all sectors involved in water framework directive implementation. The findings of the Lough Muckno project will be fed into these plans.
  - Since this project has commenced the workplan of the water team has been strongly influenced by the project. The water quality data from the project was used to focus our workplans in the catchment areas where improvements are required.
  - Catchment characterisation and inspections are ongoing in the County Water and the Gentle Owens River Catchment areas. The project has highlighted these areas as the catchment areas contributing the most significant loads to Lough Muckno.
  - Due to the cross-border nature of the contributing tributaries to Lough Muckno, Monaghan County Council met with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency in 2024 to discuss the findings of the project, it is hoped to have further collaboration in 2025.
- (c) What is the update on the recommendation of the plan for engagement with local stakeholders including the farming community?

The findings from the project were presented to the local community in Castleblayney Library in October 2024. There was great engagement at this event and indeed a fascination with the findings and the history of the Lough Muckno sediment. There has been ongoing engagement particularly with the farming community in the Gentle Owens and County Water catchment areas mainly through one-to-one engagement with farmers in the catchment area on water quality issues. Whilst the MCC inspections and increased engagement with local communities and landowners is expected to contribute somewhat to improved water quality, it is important to note that additional measures are required. Further characterisation and funding of required measures in the catchment area is needed. Monaghan County Council have been included as an associate partner in a PEACE 5.3 application "Protecting our Shared Waters". The project if successful, will aim to develop transferable catchment management solutions that will contribute to water

quality/quantity improvements and benefit cross-border communities, landowners, stakeholders, peace and prosperity in the Region. Some small-scale piloting of Nature Based solutions and agronomic measures in the Fane Catchment are proposed as part of this project.

(d) What is the current status of Lough Muckno?

The most recent Water Framework Directive (WFD) Status of Lough Muckno 2016-2021 is Moderate Status. Lough Muckno improved from Bad Status (2013-2018) to Moderate Status (2016-2021). The Water Framework Directive Objective for Lough Muckno is Good Status by 2027, the findings of the Lough Muckno Road to Recovery Project indicate that it will take 12 years after all external loads of phosphorus to the lake have ceased to achieve this target. The next status update will be contained in the EPA Water Quality in Ireland Report which is due to be published later this year. Lough Muckno is not a designated bathing water, but MCC do monitor for bathing water parameters at three locations on the lake on a monthly basis from June to September each year. This monitoring is planned for 2025, and results will be published on the Monaghan County Council website. Whilst there were no exceedances detected in 2024, there have been a number of exceedances of the bathing water parameters in recent years at the bathing area. There was an algal bloom recorded in 2024 and given the levels of phosphorus in the lake we are likely to continue to see algal blooms on the Lough particularly during clam warm conditions.

<https://monaghan.ie/environment/bathing-waters/>

14. With a recent announcement of funding for Active Travel Projects in County Monaghan, where and when will these project commerce and when will they be completed?

Reply:

NTA Phase 1 - Scope and Purpose

NTA Phase 2 - Options Selection

NTA Phase 3 - Preliminary Design

NTA Phase 4 - Statutory Processes

NTA Phase 5 - Detailed Design and Procurement

NTA Phase 6 - Construction

NTA Phase 7 - Close out and Review

Project Code:	Project Name	2025 Allocation	NTA Phase Feb 2025	Expected NTA Phase Q4 2025
MN/21/0001	Upgrade of Monaghan Town Greenway	€30,000	6	7
MN/21/0010	Carrickmacross Castleblayney Rd Active Travel Scheme	€140,000	3	5
MN/21/0013	Monaghan Town Horseshoe Bridge Active Travel Measures	€1,075,000	5	6

MN/21/0014	Monaghan Town Ballyalbaney Bridge Active Travel Measures	€50,000	5	5
MN/21/0020	Low Cost Junction Tightening/Pedestrian Crossing Schemes	€160,000	5	6
MN/22/0001	Clones Peace Link Active Travel Scheme	€50,000	6	7
MN/22/0002	Monaghan Town Local Transport Plan	€40,000	52	7
MN/22/0003	Staff Costs AT Team	€270,000	N/A	N/A
MN/22/0004	Lough Egish Village Active Travel Scheme	€25,000	6	7
MN/23/0007	Carrickmacross R178/Oriel Road Active Travel Scheme	€35,000	4	4
MN/23/0008	Monaghan Town Cootehill Road Active Travel Measures	€135,000	3	6
MN/23/0009	Inniskeen Village Active Travel-	€60,000	3	4
MN/23/0010	Tullyhirm Lane	€125,000	4	6
MN/23/0013	SRTS Beech Hill College Tirkeenan R2	€20,000	1	5
MN/23/0016	SRTS St Louis GNS & St Louis Infant School - Monaghan R1	€45,000	3	5
MN/23/0017	SRTS St Marys Boys NS R2	€10,000	1	5
MN/23/0019	Ulster Canal Greenway Link (Canal Street)	€60,000	3	5
MN/23/0020	Urban Mobility/Sustainability Active Travel Plans for; Castleblayney, Ballybay, Clones, & Carrickmacross	€30,000	4	7
MN/23/102	Woodview to Glen Road connectivity - Monaghan Town	€210,000	5	7
MN/25/XXX	SRTS Round 3- Killeevan NS HSRR	N/A ( NTA Design)	1	2
<b>Total – Active Travel Investment Grant</b>		<b>€2,570,000</b>		
MN/24/xxxx	Bus Stop Enhancement Programme	€500,000		
<b>Total:</b>		<b>€3,070,000</b>		

15. What is the latest update on the funding for the upgrade of the Ardee to Castleblayney Road Scheme?

**Reply: Funding has been requested from TII to recommence the Phase 3 design process in 2025. The 2025 TII allocations have not been announced yet.**

16. With funding recently announced to prepare a local sports plan for County Monaghan?  
(a) What strategies will be included in this plan?

**The Council is establishing a Steering Group for the duration of the process of developing and adopting the Local Sports Plan, part of whose function is to conduct a systems mapping exercise to identify existing internal operational structures and synergies with key strategies and policies across the Council. From a national context the following strategies will be taken into consideration –**

**National Sports Policy Alignment**

- National Sports Policy 2018-2027
- Sport Ireland Participation Plan
- National Physical Activity Plan

**National Health Policy Alignment**

- Healthy Ireland, A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013 – 2025
- Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone

**Governmental Policy Alignment**

- Programme for Government: Our Shared Future
- Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan 2021-2030
- National Development Plan 2021-2030
- Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP2023).

- National Sustainable Movement Policy
- NTA Active Travel Programme

From a local context the following strategies will be taken into consideration –

- Monaghan County Development Plan 2026-2031 (in draft)
- Monaghan Local Economic & Community Plan 2023-2029
- Monaghan Walking and Cycling Strategy 2021- 2026
- Monaghan Play and Recreation Strategy 2024- 2030 (in draft)
- Monaghan County Outdoor Recreation Plan 2025-2029 (in draft)
- Monaghan County Council Tourism Strategy 2023-2028
- Monaghan Biodiversity & Heritage Strategic Plan 2020-2025
- Any relevant Town Plans / Local Community plans
- Consideration given to Local Area masterplans / feasibility study data, where relevant to sport and physical activity

(b) What plans has Monaghan County Council to engage with the sports clubs and communities for this plan?

**Reply:** The framework for the development of the plan has not yet been decided but it will include a widespread consultation process to involve the views of community groups and sports clubs in the county through in-person public consultation, focus groups, stakeholder engagement and online survey options available.

(c) When is this plan to be implemented?

**Reply:** Sport Ireland has requested that the plan be developed in 2025

17. With regard to the Market Expert Grant set up to assist local companies who are exporting?

- (a) What criteria is needed to avail of this grant?
- (b) What is covered under this grant for export companies?

**Reply:** The Market Explorer Grant launched in January replaces the Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters Grant. The new grant has been introduced to strategically support businesses to research and explore activities in new markets and will contribute to the Government's target of an additional 2,500 exporters by 2030.

The grant is open to small enterprises (with between 1 and 50 paid employees) that meet the following criteria:

- Operate as Manufacturing or eligible internationally traded services businesses and are solvent as demonstrated in the financial statements supplied and have current tax clearance from Revenue.
- Are not currently clients of Enterprise Ireland or IDA.
- Operate commercially and are established and trading for at least 12 months, registered, and carrying on activity within the area of the Local Enterprise Office
- Have demonstrated intention to internationalise i.e.
  - have completed Export Accelerator or similar LEO Exporter Programme or
  - have developed an internationalisation plan or
  - have initial small-scale exports below €10,000 that can be increased.

Support for the Market Explorer for Business grant applies when eligible companies seek to explore either a new geographic market for an existing product/service or an existing geographic market for a new product/service.

Eligible activities supported under this grant include the following: -

- Market Research
- In Market Consultancy
- Trade Fair attendance
- Trade Fair Exhibition
- Overseas Travel
- Subsistence – subject to conditions

Direct sales and marketing activities are ineligible.

**The amount of the grant is to a maximum of €10,000 or 50% of eligible costs.**

**Cllr N. Keelan will ask:**

- 18.** Has Monaghan County Council an estimated costing of the damage caused by the recent storm Éowyn event; will these unforeseen costs be met in full by central Government?

**Reply:** In early February, The National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM) within with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) requested information from each Local Authority on forecasted expenditure associated with clean-up, response and community support activities in the aftermath of Storm Eowyn. Monaghan County Council submitted initial cost estimates of c.€1.142m. At this time, clean up and response costs are continued to be incurred by Monaghan County Council so as of yet, actual final costs are unknown. Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and the Department of Transport (DoT) have indicated that they will fund costs associated with Road's repair and clearing. It is expected that all Storm Eowyn associated costs will be recoupable from either TII, DoT or DHLGH.

- 19.** As discussed at a previous meeting of the council, is there any indication from the department or the new line Ministers office that the Croi Conaithe grant aid will be reinstated for agriculture type buildings, in order to bring them into residential use as was the case previously?

**Reply:** It is understood that the terms of the grant are being reviewed, and that consideration is being given to the inclusion of agricultural, type buildings within the scheme. Once the findings of this review have been announced details of same will be provided to the members

- 20.** Given that the new 60km speed limits are now in place across the county, what is the up-to-date position in relation to the review of the speed limits on the national routes, in particular on the access routes into our towns and villages, including the access route into Castleblayney town coming from the Carrickmacross direction along the N53?

**Reply:** It was previously envisaged by the DOT that the 30kph special speed limit for city or town centres, residential roads and locations where there is a significant presence of vulnerable/active road users would be in place nationally before end of June 2025. This has now been deferred until further notification. The DOT are currently developing the criteria that is to be used to justify introduction of 30kph zones.

Separately, MCC are carrying out our National Road Speed Limit Review in 2025. Several submissions have been received to date from members of the public, elected reps etc. As a starting point in the process of making by-laws, a public consultation will be organised over the next few weeks via newspaper ad and MCC website, whereby submissions will be invited for consideration as part of the review.

- 21.** What progress if any has been made in relation to the proposed upgrading and improvement of the Dundalk to Cavan town regional road (R178) Including the section from Carrickmacross to Shercock town which is a very important transport and economic link and not currently fit for purpose?

**Reply:** The Department of Transport (DOT) have identified strategically important sections of this route within Monaghan County. MCC are to meet with the DOT in q2 2025 to discuss the possibility to progress these schemes under the Strategic Grant funding stream in 2026.

- 22.** Given that so many trees may have been weakened by the recent storm Éowyn event, and may pose a serious threat to public safety, can the current legislation around tree felling be set aside to allow the local authority, the farming community, and individuals fell trees that may pose a danger to the public outside the hedge cutting season which ends on March 1 ?

**Reply:** The legislation allows for the felling of a tree, shrub, hedge or other vegetation if considered a hazard or a potential hazard. The legislation also specifies that the responsibility for maintaining hedge rows and trees lies with the landowner and any issue around amending the legislation is a matter for the Dail/Minister.

**Cllr S. Conlon will ask:**

- 23.** Following the 'Expressions of Interest' consultation period completed on February 14<sup>th</sup> with the intent to developing the Council owned 16 acre Industrial / Enterprise / Employment Lands at Annahagh on the Monaghan Town N2 by-pass, what progress has occurred, and what are the next steps planned, that will bring this project closer to development?

**Reply:** Monaghan County Council received Expressions of Interest from 12 businesses through our commercial real estate advisors, Avison Young. It is intended that Monaghan County Council will meet / engage with each of the businesses over the coming weeks.

**Recommendations on the disposal of lands, under Section 183 of the LG Act, 2001, will not be made, in advance of the completion of the statutory planning process for the Part VIII development and the individual business planning application approval.**

- 24.** In relation to the construction, design and installation of garden fencing provided in Council housing schemes where wooden 100mm posts are set in concrete, and have consistently proven to rot within 10 – 15 years, can the Housing Section confirm that current housing schemes under construction, and future designs, that concrete posts will be installed to ensure a more robust method of fencing to ensure longevity, value for money, and resistant to high winds?

**Reply:** All new fences erected in housing schemes delivered by Monaghan County Council have concrete posts and all future housing schemes delivered by Monaghan County Council will have fences with concrete posts or alternative robust method of fencing to ensure longevity, value for money, and resistant to high winds.

- 25.** In reference to goods and services purchased by Monaghan County Council:

- a) what measures are enshrined in contracts and procurement guidelines that will provide assurances to the tax-paying public that value for money is delivered at all times, within budget, and that completion timescales are met, as agreed at signing of contract.

**Reply:** Monaghan County Council's procurement procedure manual sets out the Council's procurement objectives which include, 'To ensure that optimum quality, service and Value for Money (VFM) are achieved across all purchasing expenditure'. The Procurement Unit promote, guides and supports staff on their procurement responsibilities and requirements across the organisation to achieve compliance and value for money. Monaghan County Council comply with the National Office of Government Procurement (OGP) requirements and utilise Frameworks where deemed appropriate and where value for money or other non-financial cost savings can be achieved. Project managers must ensure that all existing contracts are actively managed to ensure the supplier's performance and conformity with the specification of requirements is being adhered to. Project managers meet with suppliers regularly to discuss issues arising.

- b) are review mechanisms in place to ensure value for money has been achieved, and terms of contract have been adhered to?

**A Project Completion Report (PCR) must be completed for all Projects or Programs whose value exceeded €100,000 for Goods and Services and €500,000 for Works, ex VAT.**

**The purpose of the PCR is to evaluate whether project objectives were met, to determine how effectively the project was run, to learn lessons for the future and to ensure that MCC gets the greatest possible benefit from the project.**

- c) In the case of the Monaghan Town Glen Road Culvert Works contract, what was the original completion date agreed in contract for culvert installation, road and footpath re-instatement? **The original completion date for this project Q3 2024, due to unforeseen**

circumstances the completion date was extended to Q1 2025. We are currently on schedule to meet this deadline.

d) similarly, for the Mall Road overlay and footpath works, where outstanding items remain unfinished?

**The Mall Road was a collaboration of schemes between the MD, Non-National Roads and Active Travel. Outstanding works include laying additional high friction surfacing, weather-dependent and retrospective bollard installation. No outstanding items were in the original contract.**

26. Following the €100,000 allocation from the recently published 2025 Climate Change and Adaptation Programme for the Monaghan Town Plantation Road / Peters Lake Culvert, (which is the same amount allocated for this purpose in 2023 and 2024), what is the total cost of the project as recently agreed with a contractor, and can assurances be provided that, as with similar projects under this scheme throughout the County, that total costs are funded directly by the relevant government Department, and that no funds are diverted for this infrastructural project from limited Monaghan Municipal District resources?

**Reply: The estimated cost of the Peter's Lake culvert project is €516,000. The €100k allocated by DOT in 2023 was carried forward into both 2024 and 2025, due to significant difficulty in securing a contractor to carry out the works, which includes specialised tunnelling works. The project was tendered 3 times before a suitable contractor was finally appointed earlier this year. Funding for the project will come from a variety of sources, including Department of Transport, Developer contributions and local authority funding, as there is no single scheme or government department that will fund the project in its entirety, despite diligent and ongoing efforts by the Council to secure funding. The works are essential and must proceed in order to ensure that the storm drainage system is suitable for the current and future needs in this area. Having secured a contractor after much difficulty, the Council considers it prudent to proceed with the works in order to avoid further price inflation. MCC will continue to seek funding for the project from external sources, however it is possible that a request may be made to the Municipal District if a shortfall still remains.**

27. With a breakdown of each Municipal District, (a) what number of housing units have the Planning Office issued commencement notices for that enables housing projects to start development, since January 2022, and (b) similarly, what number of active housing unit applications are currently being assessed by Council Planners?

**Reply:**

- a) **Number of dwelling units per MD notified as commenced from January 2022 to present as follows:**

	<b>No of New Dwelling Units</b>
<b>Ballybay/Clones MD</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Carrickmacross/Castleblayney MD</b>	<b>381</b>
<b>Monaghan MD</b>	<b>423</b>
<b>Total for County Monaghan</b>	<b>925</b>

**Note:** The number of new dwelling units includes both multi-unit and one-off housing developments.

- b) **The Planning Authority are currently dealing with the following active cases outlined in the table below:**

Municipal District	No of Planning Applications	No of Housing Units
Ballybay-Clones	5	43
Carrickmacross-Castleblayney	7	152
Monaghan	6	107

**Cllr N. McCooley will ask:**

28. In advance of the publication of the Department of Housing's National Planning Framework anticipated later this year, where it is hoped overdue radical measures will be rolled out to ease intense housing pressures, what impact will it have on current residential zoning decisions made with the adoption of the Development Plan in the months ahead.

**Reply: The Planning Section is not currently in a position to comment on the potential impacts on residential zonings of possible new measures, in advance to their publication.**

### **Extension of Meeting**

*On the proposal of Cllr PJ O'Hanlon, seconded by Cllr N. Keelan, as the time had reached 3.00pm, it was agreed to extend the meeting to 4.00pm to discuss the remaining balance on the agenda.*

## **19. Notices of Motion**

**On behalf of the Sinn Fein party members, Cllr P. Treanor proposed, Cllr S. Conlon seconded-**

1. *That Monaghan County Council deplores those corporations that profit from protracted armed conflict and systematic violation of human rights, particularly in the context of Israel's continuing brutal assault on the people of Gaza and escalating settler terrorism in the West Bank, Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, and other conflicts around the world. With this motion, the Council encourages companies to meet their obligations to avoid contributing to adverse human rights impacts through their own activities, and to prevent or mitigate human rights abuses linked to their operations.*

*Monaghan County Council is aware of the crucial role of local authorities and their public procurement procedures in ensuring respect for human rights by companies, as well as their obligations under widely accepted business and human rights norms – as laid down in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, and the Global Sullivan Principles (1999) – to promote respect for human rights by companies with which they do business.*

*Secondly, Monaghan County Council affirms that every endeavour is made to ensure that council's tender processes are consistent with the above principles, including under the Fourth Geneva convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and under customary international humanitarian law, prohibiting the importation or sale of goods or services originating in occupied territories.*

*Thirdly, Monaghan County Council resolves to adopt a rights-based Ethical Procurement Policy (EPP) that takes fully into account existing obligations and standards. The EPP will incorporate widely accepted and precisely formulated international standards and explain clearly how the policy will be implemented. The primary aim of the EPP is to ensure that human rights obligations are properly acknowledged, observed, and respected at all stages of the procurement process."*



**Response by Chief Executive:**

***“Monaghan County Council has a Procurement policy that is constantly evolving. This policy and underlying procedures are governed by National Procurement Legislation which is grounded in EU Directives – principally the EU Procurement Directive.***

***The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment advise that neither Ireland nor the EU currently have restrictive measures above and beyond the current trade sanctions in place. Ireland does not impose any unilateral sanctions regimes but implements UN and EU sanctions. The Council of the European Union adopts EU sanctions through Council decisions, which must be agreed unanimously. Ireland has given undertakings as part of its WTO membership to grant non-discriminatory access to its markets in goods and services and has joined the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA), expanding its commitments with regard to market access.***

***The Department has previously indicated that any move by a public authority to act outside of any agreement may be seen to breach our international trade commitments and also may be seen as discriminatory in relation to goods and services, otherwise legally saleable within the Union.***

***Changes to how Monaghan County Council treat economic operators in prohibiting the importation or sale of goods or services originating in occupied territories need to be made nationally by way of an amendment to regulations, similar to the amendment made in April 2022 in relation to a prohibition on the award of public contracts with Russian nationals and entities or bodies established in Russia (EU Regulation 2022/576).***

***Under the current Irish and EU Procurement regime, suppliers in a country outside of the EU that has signed up to the World Trade Organisation's Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) are eligible to submit tenders for Irish public sector contracts. It would not be appropriate to interfere with contract law in the way proposed by the motion in relation to the exclusion of economic operators of sale of goods or services originating in occupied territories, above and beyond current regulations, as this could potentially leave Monaghan County Council open to a specific performance court action and costs.***

***With regards to the delivery of obligations, both ethical and legal, in the fulfilment of procurement activities, Monaghan County Council are solely subject to the requirements laid out by the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) as part of the central Irish government. The requirements of the OGP are defined by the legal regulations of the Statutory Instrument 284 of 2016 and any subsequent circulars issued by the OGP, which in turn is driven by the European Union Procurement Directive. In the defining of the EU legislation that has been transposed into Irish Law through the Statutory Instrument 284 of 2016, the key principles of procurement that have been embodied include:***

- ***Transparency***
- ***Fair and Equal Treatment***

- **Open competition**
- **Sound procedural management.**

*The requirements and restrictions on completing procurement activities are driven by the central government, and MCC endeavours to complete its obligations in full compliance with these regulations. As part of the mandated obligations by the OGP, MCC has a Corporate Procurement Policy (CPP) that details how we work in accordance with the regulations and internal governance. The motion also calls on this Council to exclude companies involved in human rights and international law violations when tendering bids. Monaghan County Council have the discretion to exclude economic operators only in the circumstances set out in Regulation 57(8) of S.I. 284 of 2016, including for: non-compliance with environmental, social and labour law obligations (Regulation 57(8)(a)), bankruptcy (Regulation 57(8)(b)), grave professional misconduct (Regulation 57(8)(c)), distortion of competition (Regulation 57(8)(d)), and past poor performance which led to termination, damages or other comparable sanctions (Regulation 57(8)(g)). Monaghan County Council will also strictly enforce any future EU or National regulations that may apply to economic operators from countries occupying other territories.”*

#### **Extension of Meeting**

*On the proposal of Cllr B. McAree, seconded by Cllr PJ O’Hanlon, as the time had reached 4.00pm, it was agreed to extend the meeting to 4.30pm to discuss the remaining balance on the agenda.*

Following a discussion on the motion, a recorded vote was taken which resulted as follows:

**For:** Cllrs C. Carthy, S. Conlon, S. Flynn, N. Keelan, P. Treanor, N. McCooey, B. McAree and P. Gibbons

**Total: 8**

**Against:** Cllrs R. Aughey, P. Clerkin, P. Conlon, S. Coyle, S. Gilliland, PJ O’Hanlon, and S. Treanor

**Total: 7**

The Cathaoirleach declared the proposal carried.

**Cllr S. Flynn proposed, Cllr N. Keelan seconded -**

2. *That Monaghan County Council write again to the Minister for Education, Helen McEntee TD and to Siobhan Griffin Regional School Transport Manager for Bus Eireann, to request a meeting as soon as possible, to ensure that all eligible students are afforded school transport for the academic school year commencing September 2025 and furthermore to discuss those outstanding school transport issues which have been unresolved to date.*

Following a short discussion on the motion, the Cathaoirleach put it to the meeting and it was agreed unanimously.

**Cllr P. Clerkin proposed, Cllr B. McAree seconded -**

3. *That Monaghan County Council write to the Minister for Transport Darragh O'Brien TD, asking that his department create an allocation of funding, particular to Bog Roads (roads over peat), taking into consideration the current deterioration of Bog Roads across Co. Monaghan.*

Following a short discussion on the motion, the Cathaoirleach put it to the meeting and it was agreed unanimously.

Consideration of Notice of Motion 19 (4) was withdrawn.

## **20. Votes of sympathy/congratulations**

It was agreed that votes of congratulations would be extended to the following:

- The Order, Nuns and staff of St Louis Convent in Monaghan Town, for their huge contribution in education and healthcare to thousands of pupils and boarders that have passed through St Louis gates and for the care provided by the Sisters to their many retired colleagues in residence of the nursing home for over 166 years of ministry in Monaghan.
- The management and each member of the St. Louis Convent U19 Basketball Team on winning the U19 All Ireland Basketball Championship 2025.
- Dervla Cawley, Amy Jo Kierans, Katie McAdam and Aobhinn Nic Cormaic on their selection to the Ulster Post Primary All Star Teams.

## **21. Conferences**

*On the proposal of Cllr S. Gilliland seconded by Cllr N. Keelan it was agreed that the Council be represented at the following training events by the members listed below:*

<b>Promoting Authority</b>	<b>Subject/Theme</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Members Selected</b>
AILG	Embracing Equality and Cultivating Local Communities	Eastern Midland/Northern & Western Region	22 <sup>nd</sup> March 2025	Cllr P. Treanor Cllr S. Conlon Cllr R. Truell Cllr P. Gibbons
AILG	Annual Training Conference	Limerick Strand Hotel	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> April	Cllr N. Keelan Cllr S. Flynn Cllr P. Treanor Cllr S. Conlon Cllr N. McCooey Cllr PJ O'Hanlon Cllr R. Truell Cllr S. Gilliland

The meeting then concluded.

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

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Meetings  
Administrator

Date: _____
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