

Minutes of the Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Council Chamber, M-Tek Building, Armagh Rd, Knockaconny, Monaghan, on Monday 07 April 2025 at 2.00 p.m.

Chair: Cllr P. Gibbons, Cathaoirleach

Present: Cllrs Aughey, Campbell, Carthy, Clerkin, P. Conlon, S. Conlon, Flynn, Gilliland, Johnston, Keelan, McAree, McCooey, 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

Apologies: Cllr S. Coyle

1. Confirmation of Council Meeting Minutes held on 03 March 2025

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr N. Keelan, it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 03 March 2025 be confirmed.

2. Correspondence

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

- Letter from Cavan and Monaghan Area Manager, ESB Networks, regarding Storm Éowyn.
- Email from LRSD/ERSD Analyst, Uisce Éireann, regarding Storm Éowyn.
- Letter from the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Mr. Darragh O'Brien, T.D., regarding the North South Interconnector and future preparedness for severe weather events.
- Email from the Private Secretary to the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Mr. Darragh O'Brien, T.D., regarding trees along public roads.
- Email from the Minister for Mental Health, Ms. Mary Butler, T.D., regarding funding for the SOSAD messaging service.
- Email from the Private Secretary to the Minister of State, with responsibility for Disability, Ms. Hildegard Naughton, T.D., regarding modern vehicle adaptation supports.
- Email from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Mr. James Browne, T.D., regarding an eviction ban.
- Email from the Chief Executive, National Transport Authority, Mr. Hugh Creegan regarding active travel projects.
- Acknowledgement email from Bus Éireann regarding school transport.
- Acknowledgement email from the Office of the Minister for Education, Ms. Helen McEntee, T.D., regarding school transport.
- Acknowledgement email from the Head of Service, HSE, Ms. Mandy Doyle regarding the SOSAD messaging service.
- Acknowledgement email from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Transport, Mr. Darragh O'Brien, T.D., regarding funding for bog roads.
- Acknowledgement email from the Office of An Taoiseach, Mr. Micheál Martin, regarding VAT rates.
- Resolution from Donegal County Council regarding dog control measures.
- Resolution from Sligo County Council regarding places for children with additional needs at their local primary and secondary schools.
- Resolution from Sligo County Council regarding the use of counselling/therapy notes in all cases of gender-based violence.
- Resolution from Clare County Council regarding funding for Early Years Educators.

2.1 Additional Correspondence

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

- Letter from Mr. Martin Corrigan, Chief Executive, Eirgrid regarding the North-South Interconnector.
- Letter from Mr. Hugh Creegan, Interim Chief Executive, National Transport Authority regarding funding for active travel projects.

Proposals arising out of correspondence:

On the proposal of Cllr S. Flynn, seconded by Cllr B. McAree, it was agreed that this Council supports the Sligo CoCo motion calling on the Minister for Justice to immediately prohibit the use of counselling and therapy notes in all cases of gender-based violence. Survivors must be able to seek support without fear that their private records will be used against them. Protecting their confidentiality is essential for ensuring justice and safety.

A vote by show of hands resulted in 10 for, 7 abstentions.

The Cathaoirleach declared the motion carried.

On the proposal of Cllr S. Conlon, seconded by Cllr N. Keelan, it was agreed that this Council, writes to the Taoiseach, Mr. Simon Harris and the Minister for Transport, Mr. Darragh O'Brien T.D., regarding correspondence received from the National Transport Authority seeking their intervention aimed at increasing the budget allocation for Active Travel measures in County Monaghan. The reasons provided by the National Transport Authority will result in an extended delay in implementing Active Travel measures that have been over four years and more in providing overdue vulnerable road user infrastructure.

3. To consider Taking in Charge – Annahale, Castleblayney

Mr. A. Hughes, Senior Planner, outlined the proposed taking in charge of Annahale, Castleblayney. He advised that a request had been made by the developer for the footpath and associated services within the Annahale development in Castleblayney Town to be taken in charge. The Planning Authority is satisfied that the development can be considered for taking in charge.

On the proposal Cllr A. Campbell, seconded by Cllr P. Gibbons, it was agreed that the Council approve the application for Annahale, Castleblayney in accordance with the Taking In Charge of Estates and Declaration of Public Roads Notice, under Section 180 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Section 11 of the Roads Act 1993.

4. To consider Section 183 - Disposal of 13 Old Cross Square

Mr. C. Flynn, Director of Services, referred to the proposed disposal of property at 13 Old Cross Square, Monaghan, Co. Monaghan – site area 0.0137 hectares. He advised that the property had been acquired in late 2024 by the Town and Regeneration Team, under URDF Funding to address dereliction & vacancy and re-sell on the open market.

On the proposal of Cllr S. Treanor, seconded by Cllr A. Johnston, it was agreed that the Council approve the sale of lands of lands at 13 Old Cross Square, Monaghan, in accordance with the terms of the notice dated 21st January 2025 and attached site location map in accordance with S183 of the Local Government Act 2001.

5. To consider Section 183 - Right of Way at Cavanguillagh, Castleblayney

Mr. G. McMahon, A/Director of Services, referred to the proposed granting of a Right of Way over lands at Cavanguillagh, Castleblayney. He advised that the proposed Right of Way relates to the regularisation of a land deal that arose from the Castleblayney Bypass.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Gibbons, seconded by Cllr A. Campbell, it was agreed that the Council grant a Right of Way over lands at Cavanguillagh, Castleblayney, in accordance with the terms of the notice dated 22nd January 2025 and attached site location map in accordance with S183 of the Local Government Act 2001.

6. To receive an overview of the Draft County Outdoor Recreation Plan 2025 – 2030

Ms. D. Condra, Tourism and Marketing Executive, informed the members that Outscape Consultants had been appointed to assist in the development of the Draft County Outdoor Recreation Plan 2025-2030. In providing the context, she stated that a key recommendation from the national outdoor recreation strategy that was launched by the Department of Rural Community Development in 2022 – ‘Embracing Ireland’s Outdoors 2023-2027’ was, that each county develop its own outdoor recreation plan. She stated that the rationale for the plan relates to outdoor recreation funding streams and ensuring that future outdoor recreation projects submitted for funding fully align with the national strategy. Ms. Condra advised that a project steering group had been established to oversee the development of the plan and includes representation from key stakeholders such as Coillte, Fáilte Ireland, Inland Fisheries, Waterways Ireland, Rural Recreation Officer (Monaghan Integrated Development) and the Local Sports Partnership.

Ms. K. Coulter, Outscape, provided the members with an overview in relation to the development of the Draft County Outdoor Recreation Plan 2025-2030. Key points to note were:

- The development of the plan has been shaped by regional and local strategies including the Draft Monaghan County Development Plan 2025-2031, Fáilte Ireland Monaghan Destination Experience Development Plan 2022-2026, Monaghan Tourism Strategy 2023 – 2028 and Monaghan Local Sports Plan.
- In line with the national guidelines, the project steering group guided the direction of the Plan’s development, reaching consensus on strategic priorities and actions following a period of:
 - Desk research, GIS mapping and site visits.
 - Key stakeholder consultations
 - In-person consultation events
 - An online public survey capturing 248 responses over a 6-week period.
- Walking was noted as the most popular activity amongst respondents to the consultation exercise, with 77% indicating that they participate, whilst angling was the second most popular activity amongst respondents at 34%. Respondents indicated that the areas in need of greatest improvement included;
 - Quantity/Quality of public toilets, accessible toilets, changing facilities and accessibility.
 - Public transport provision, directional signage and availability of information online.
 - Shops and equipment hire, accommodation and motorhome/camping facilities.
- Lough Muckno, Rossmore Forrest Park, Ulster Canal/Clones Marina and Sliabh Beagh were identified as ‘Stand-Out’ assets which to date, have been the focus of County Monaghan’s activity tourism offering.
- The statement of strategic priorities outlines that the priority for outdoor recreation

in County Monaghan over the next five years is “To develop quality, inclusive and sustainable experiences for both our residents and our visitors, that will encourage them to engage, participate and enjoy the great outdoors.”.

Ms. K. Coulter gave a brief overview of the actions for the next five years under the six key themes; Leadership and Collaboration; Environment; Access and Infrastructure; Awareness; Opportunities; and Expertise.

On the proposal of Cllr A. Johnston, seconded by Cllr P. Conlon it was agreed to adopt the Draft County Outdoor Recreation Plan 2025-2030 as presented.

Ms. D. Condra and Mr. R. Burns responded to members’ queries.

The members thanked Ms. D. Condra and Ms. K. Coulter for their presentation.

On the proposal of Cllr. S. Conlon, seconded by Cllr. N. McCooey, it was agreed that this Council write to Uisce Eireann and the Environmental Protection Agency seeking them to initiate the process of developing one key site as a designated bathing water location in County Monaghan.

A vote by show of hands resulted in 5 for and 7 against.

The Cathaoirleach declared the motion defeated.

7. To consider Funding Recommendation – Tourism Festival Funding

In accordance with the Ethics Framework, Cllr Carthy declared a possible conflict of interest in relation to this item and withdrew from the meeting room whilst the matter was being dealt with.

Members noted the Reports circulated which recommended the allocation of funding under the Tourism Focused Festival & Event Fund 2025 and the Failte Ireland Regional Festivals & Participative Events Funding Scheme 2025:

Ms. D. Condra, Tourism and Marketing Executive advised that the total budget to assist in the delivery of these projects is:

Monaghan County Council Tourism Focused Festival & Event Fund 2025: €10,000

Failte Ireland Regional Festivals & Participative Events Funding Scheme 2025: €5,000

18 applications were received under the Tourism Focused Festival & Event Fund 2025. It is proposed to fund 8 applications to the value of €10,000.

7 applications were received under the Failte Ireland Regional Festivals & Participative Events Funding Scheme 2025. It is proposed to fund 3 applications to the value of €5,000.

Ms. D. Condra noted that where projected profits from an event indicated that the awarding of grant funding would represent deadweight, such events were not scored.

Ms. D. Condra responded to members’ queries.

On the proposal of Cllr N. Keelan seconded by Cllr PJ O'Hanlon it was agreed that the Council approve the allocation of funding under the Tourism Focused Festival & Event Fund 2025, as per the Report circulated with the agenda.

On the proposal of Cllr N. Keelan seconded by Cllr PJ O'Hanlon it was agreed that the Council approve the allocation of funding under the Failte Ireland Regional Festivals & Participative Events Funding Scheme 2025, as per the Report circulated with the agenda.

8. To approve the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee Programme 2025-2029

Ms. M. Walker, Social Worker, Housing joined the meeting to provide the members with an overview of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee Programme 2025-2029. She outlined plans to provide good quality suitable accommodation for up to 20 Traveller families in County Monaghan through a range of housing options and highlighted that the implementation of the programme will require cooperation between the Traveller and settled communities, provision of adequate funding both at national and local level and participation by other relevant agencies.

The members thanked Ms. M. Walker for her presentation and commended her for the exemplary way in which she carries out her role.

On the proposal of Cllr S. Treanor, seconded by Cllr. N. McCooey it was agreed that the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee Programme 2025-2029 as presented, be approved.

9. To consider the Draft Monaghan County Council Annual Report 2024

The members considered the Draft Monaghan County Council Annual Report for 2024 which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

Ms M. McGarvey, A/Senior Executive Officer, outlined the main elements of the Draft Annual Report for 2024. The comprehensive report, which had been prepared in accordance with the Local Government Act, 2001, provides an overview of the activities and progress made by each of the Directorates within Monaghan County Council during 2024. Ms. McGarvey thanked Ms. M. McBride, Senior Staff Officer, Corporate Services and the Executive for their cooperation and assistance in the preparation of the Annual Report 2024.

On the proposal of Cllr A. Johnston, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed to adopt the Draft Monaghan County Council Annual Report for 2024 as presented.

10. To approve the draft Annual Audit Committee Report 2024

In accordance with the Ethics Framework, Cllr Johnston declared a possible conflict of interest in relation to this item and withdrew from the meeting room whilst the matter was being dealt with.

Ms. C. O'Hare, Director of Services, referred to the draft Annual Audit Committee Report 2024 that had been circulated with the agenda in accordance with Regulation 13 and 15 of the Local Government (Audit Committee) Regulations, 2014. She stated that the report outlines the role and function of the audit committee, membership of meetings, training

schedule, statutory and non-statutory reporting and an evaluation and review of the performance and effectiveness of the Audit Committee during the year.

On the proposal of Cllr C. Carthy, seconded by Cllr. S. Conlon it was agreed that the draft Annual Audit Committee Report 2024, as presented, be approved.

11. To receive a presentation on the updated Monaghan County Council website

Ms. C. O'Hare introduced the presentation on the updated Monaghan County Council website and the new Councillor Portal. She referred to the significance of the accessibility and functionality of the website highlighting that the Local Government Customer Services Report for 2024, identified that Local Authority websites were the most popular channel used for engagement within the past five years.

Ms. C. McKeown, Communications, joined the meeting to present the updated Monaghan County Council website. She commenced her presentation by providing members with a brief background of some of the issues that existed in the previous design of the website in relation to accessibility, functionality and inconsistency. She gave an overview of new features on the redesigned website including, an events calendar, 'News Ticker' and rolling imagery of local sites. She gave an overview of the work carried out to date to make the website more accessible, visually pleasing and user friendly. She advised the members that the homepage was redesigned to feature buttons to the most popular services (based on website analytics). She highlighted that the redesigned website is a much more compatible and 'mobile-friendly' version that will allow users to quickly access information from their smartphones/portable devices. The new design fully complies with the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 and the communications team will continue to monitor content to ensure compliance on an ongoing basis. She stated that the improvements to the website have increased the accessibility rating from 39% to 81% and a lot of positive feedback has been received from members of the public and stakeholders alike on its ease of use. C. McKeown concluded by providing the members with a demonstration of the redesigned website.

Mr. S. Johns, I.S. Technical Support, joined the meeting to demonstrate the new Councillor Portal. He stated that the aim of the new portal is to enable elected members to access council resources on one easy to navigate platform. He outlined the key features including an organisational chart with staff contact details, access to updated publications and shortcuts to the web version of MyCoCo, One Advanced and the Ethics Register.

Ms. C. O'Hare responded to members' queries.

The members thanked Ms. C. McKeown and Mr. S. Johns for their presentations.

12. To receive Climate Action Plan – 2024 Implementation Report for Elected Members and Stakeholders

Mr. M. Coyle, Climate Action Coordinator, joined the meeting to provide an update on the implementation of the Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 and progress to date. He referred to the following 4 key targets within the plan and how the Council plays a key leadership role in the delivery of climate action:

- Transition to a Climate Resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable, climate neutral economy by 2050.
- 50% improvement in the Council's energy efficiency by 2030
- 51% reduction in the Council's greenhouse gas emissions by 2030
- Engage and inform citizens on Climate Action

Mr. M. Coyle gave a brief overview of the progress to date in relation to the implementation of the 153 Actions from within the Plan; 93 from within the Climate Action Plan 2024-2029; and 60 from the Monaghan Town Decarbonisation Plan. Key points to note were:

- 70% of actions have been completed.
- 47 actions are ongoing and will be worked on continuously year-on-year.
- The council wide climate action team has been established with each member representing and leading on climate action for their respective areas.
- Excellent progress has been made in relation to the first action of the CAP 2024-2029, "To embed Climate Action into all decision-making areas of the Council". The Climate Action Unit worked closely with colleagues across the Council to ensure that climate action was reflected in the County Development Plan 2025-2031, the Town Centre First Policy and the Corporate Plan 2024-2029.
- As part of the national SEAI Energy Pathfinder programme, there will be a focus on 3 out of the top 10 Significant Energy Users (SEUs) buildings, which includes Monaghan Leisure Centre, Carrickmacross Civic Offices and Clones Library. A tender competition is now in place to appoint a Multi-Disciplinary Design Consultancy Team to investigate deep retrofit energy efficient solutions for these buildings. This will significantly reduce the overall Fossil CO2 emissions and is estimated to deliver a 33% reduction.
- Under the Community Climate Action Fund, €392,000 was allocated to 11 communities and €398,000 allocated to 6 cross-border projects for the implementation of local climate action projects, such as, installation of solar panels, biodiversity projects, water refill station and installation of energy efficient lighting.
- There were over 600 attendees at the 20 events that were organized as part of Monaghan Climate Action Week which took place from 14 – 18 October 2024.

Mr. M. Coyle concluded his presentation by acknowledging the work being undertaken and the continued buy-in across the Council under the stewardship of the senior management team. He acknowledged the work and assistance of the elected members and the wider community.

Mr. R. Burns, Ms. O. McConnon, P. Monahan and Mr. M. Coyle responded to members' queries.

The members thanked Mr. M. Coyle for his presentation.

13. To consider recommendations and minutes from Corporate Policy Group 27 March 2025

The members noted the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 27 March 2025, which had been circulated.

On the proposal of Cllr C. Carthy, seconded by Cllr S. Gilliland, it was agreed that the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 27 March 2025 and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

14. To receive Management Report – March 2025

The Chief Executive introduced the Management Report for March 2025 which had been circulated with the agenda. He referred to the appointment of the 3 Community Development Support Officers in each Municipal District and wished them well in their new roles.

The Chief Executive welcomed the significant rise in the number of planning applications in the early months of 2025, indicating an increased interest in development in County Monaghan. He concluded by commending the Town and Regeneration Team for the work they are carrying out to address vacancy and dereliction in the county.

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

The Chief Executive, Directors of Services and Ms. M. McGarvey responded to queries from the elected members.

Extension of Meeting

On the proposal of Cllr PJ O'Hanlon, seconded by Cllr P. Conlon, as the time had reached 6.00pm, it was agreed to extend the meeting to 6.30pm to discuss the remaining agenda items.

15. To receive reports from Members attending Conferences/Training events

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

- LAMA Spring Seminar - Kilford Arms Kilkenny – 30th & 31st January 2025
- AILG Training – Fairways Hotel, Dundalk – 20th February 2025
- AILG Training – Clayton Hotel, Galway – 22nd March 2025
- AILG Training – Ballybrit, Galway – 24th March 2025
- AIR Conference – Radisson Hotel, Athlone - 05th and 06th February 2025

16. Business Submitted by the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive referred to the Storm Éowyn Response and Recovery Report that had been circulated to members and invited Mr. G. McMahon, A/Director of Services and Chair of the Emergency Response Recovery Group (ERRG), to provide members with an update in relation to the conclusions and key recommendations.

Mr. G. McMahon provided members with a brief overview of the Emergency Response Recovery Group's key findings and recommendations following the comprehensive review into the Recovery and Response to Storm Éowyn. He referred to the level of response provided by council staff and other agencies. Key points to note were:

- 12 members of staff supported the ESB in timber clearing activities.
- 311 repair requests were dealt with through the housing repair line.
- A community helpline was established and operated from the Peace Campus for the duration of the response.
- Community hubs were established at 18 locations across the county, including 8 that were resourced by Council staff.

Mr. G. McMahon stated that once the initial emergency phase had passed the ERRG was established to lead the recovery phase. During this period, road repairs, public lighting, broadband restoration and resilience planning were prioritised. In addition, the ERRG prepared an estimate of costs to address recovery and repair arising from the storm and submitted a preliminary claim to the Department for €1.1m. In relation to the debrief, he advised that 137 responses were received to the online questionnaire. Debriefs were also conducted with elected members, internal staff, HSE, An Garda Síochána, ESB and Uisce Éireann. A total of 35 recommendations emerged from the debrief and review under 7 main headings. He stated that whilst some of the recommendations fall outside the remit of the Council, it is the intention to pursue as many as possible over the coming weeks and months to build the capacity and resilience of our buildings, services and communities to better withstand any future severe storm events. He concluded by stating that whilst Storm Éowyn presented challenges that were rarely experienced across the Council's systems, services and communities, overall the Council's response was, strong & compassionate, partnerships were formed and local knowledge was built upon.

On the proposal of Cllr N. Keelan, seconded by Cllr A. Campbell it was agreed that consideration of the Emergency Response Recovery Group's - Storm Éowyn Response and Recovery Report be deferred to the May County Council meeting.

17. Matters arising out of the minutes of the Council meetings held on 03 March 2025

In response to a query from Cllr. P. Treanor it was agreed that an update on the joint campaign between Monaghan County Council and the Residential Tenancies Board in relation to New Tenancy Registration, be included in the Management Report at the May Council meeting.

There were no further matters arising out of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 03 March 2025.

18. To receive update on N2 National Primary Road Schemes

Consideration of this item was deferred to the May County Council meeting.

19. To receive update on North/South Interconnector project

Consideration of this item was deferred to the May County Council meeting.

20. To receive update on the Ulster Canal project

Consideration of this item was deferred to the May County Council meeting.

21. Questions and Replies

Cllr C. Carthy will ask:

1. Can the council executive confirm if the process of 'taking in charge' has begun on the Ard na Radhairc estate, Carrickmacross (council's turn-key development) and, if so, is there an indicative timeframe for the completion of this process?

Reply: *This estate was built by a private developer, although Monaghan County Council has acquired 41 No. houses within it. Some works remain outstanding, although once completed, it is understood that the developer intends to submit a taking in charge application for the development. No timeframe can be provided for the completion of this process at this time.*

2. What is the latest timeframe for the completion of the 'taking in charge' of both Alderwood and Lough na Glack housing estates, Carrickmacross?

Reply:

Alderwood: *The Local Authority is continuing to liaise with the developer's agent regarding remediation of a number of defects in the estate. Once these matters have been resolved the intent*

to take the estate in charge will be advertised.

Lough Na Glack: The local authority is still awaiting the remediation of defects in the estate in relation to public lighting. Once these have been resolved the recommendation to take in charge the estate will be presented to Council

3. Has there been any further progress in assessing potential sites for a Campervan Park in Carrickmacross?

Reply: The provision of campervan facilities is being considered in conjunction with the development of a number of higher-level plans and studies for the Carrickmacross area including, the Convent Lands Landscape Concept Masterplan, the Gallows Hill Greenspace Masterplan, and the on-going site feasibility assessment process for the proposed swimming pool and leisure complex.

4. a) When is it expected budget breakdowns for Municipal District roads will be provided and, b) when is it expected resurfacing works will take place on our programme roads?

Reply:

a) The budget breakdown for the Municipal Districts of Monaghan, Carrickmacross-Castleblaney and Ballybay-Clones roads were presented to the Municipal District members meetings on the 18th, 24th and 31st March, respectively.

b) The timeline for the RI Roads Programme works is as follows:

- Tender Published 24th February***
- Tender return 31st March***
- Tender assessment and letter of intent issued – 4th April***
- Standstill period & Letter of Acceptance (2weeks) – 18th April***
- Works commencement – 28th April***

The roads budget breakdown has been circulated to the MD's, however, the number of roads to be completed under the RI contract cannot be confirmed until the tenders are assessed.

5. How many council housing units are currently vacant in Co. Monaghan and what is the current re-let timeframe?

Reply: Monaghan County Council currently has 17no properties vacant on 26/03/2025, 15no are undergoing works and 2no are awaiting Tenants to sign tenancy agreement.

This is 0.9% (17no vacant / 1851no overall properties) of the total number of MCC owned properties, which is one of the lowest vacancy rates nationally.

In 2024, Monaghan County Council had an average reletting time of 15.7 weeks.

Cllr P. Gibbons will ask:

6. I welcome the increase in the amounts to be awarded to successful applicants under the Housing Grant for People with a Disability, Mobility Aids Grant and Housing Aid for Older People Grant schemes. Has the total amount to be received by Monaghan County Council from Government to fund these schemes in 2025 been received yet? If this total funding amount is not increased on a pro rata basis with individual grant increases Monaghan County Council may not be able to assist as many applicants.

Reply: Monaghan County Council has yet to receive its 2025 allocation for private housing grants. Once received, details will be included in the monthly CE Report.

7. Can an update be provided on the Masterplan for Lough Muckno? What are the proposed timelines for the process and what plans are there for public consultation?

Reply: Cunnane Stratton Reynolds have been appointed as lead consultants to prepare the Lough Muckno Master Plan and Development framework. This will act as a blueprint for its sustainable evolution, to guide phased development of enhanced visitor experiences, and to act as an exemplar recreational and amenity facility for Castleblaney's townspeople and for visitors.

The consultant team have carried out preliminary site visits and met with Council staff on 10 March. It is intended that the consultants will meet with the Municipal District Members at the Municipal District meeting on 28 April and subsequently commence the stakeholder engagement process thereafter. The timeframe for the delivery of this project is 18 months.

8. Are there plans for affordable housing provision in the Castleblaney area? How many of the expressions of interest in affordable housing received indicated they were from Castleblaney?

Reply:

There is currently no approved plans for an affordable purchase scheme in Castleblaney. The most recent EOI survey only sought interest for affordable housing in Monaghan Town and didn't consider geographic location. However, 24 people from Castleblaney have contacted the affordable homes officer directly expressing interest in the current scheme. MCC are however interested in future

collaborations with developers county wide.

9. How many notices were served under Section 70 of the Roads Act in 2024?

Reply: *There were no Section 70 notices issued in 2024. However, the MDs engaged with a number of landowners in relation to overgrown hedges trees etc.*

- *Monaghan MD sent 10 letters*
- *Carrickmacross/Castleblayney 11 letters*
- *Ballybay/Clones sent 8 letters. The GSS in BCMD also had direct contact with well over 20 landowners regarding this issue.*

10. A recent Goodbody survey of commercial vacancy revealed a national average vacancy rate of 14.5%. Castleblayney had the highest vacancy rate in County Monaghan of the towns assessed at 23.5% - significantly above the national average. Can an overview of actions being taken to address this issue in Castleblayney be given?

Reply: *The Council have identified 71.no properties in Castleblayney that are either vacant or derelict. 23 no properties in Castleblayney have been issued Section 8 (2) notices, which is a notice of intent to place on register and 14.no properties have been entered on the Derelict Site Register. Properties entered on the Derelict Site Register are subject to an annual levy of 7% of the value of the property.*

The Council have previously identified 20.no properties in Castleblayney which are now subject to the RZLT 3% levy of the value of the property in 2025. A further 15 no properties have been included in the draft map for 2026.

Cllr N. Keelan will ask:

11. When is it expected that the new county development plan including new polices will be adopted and come in to force? By way of clarification and to confirm, the new development plan will be in force until the spring of 2031, is that correct?

Reply: *Following the 'Material Alterations' consultation period which runs from the 13th March 2025 to the 10th April 2025, a further Chief Executive report will be presented to Elected Members. It is intended that Elected Members will decide to make/adopt the Monaghan County Development Plan 2025-2031 on or before the 26th May 2025. The adopted plan will come into effect 6 weeks after that date, and shall remain in place for a period of six years.*

12. As discussed at Municipal District and County Council level, when is it proposed to develop village plans including a comprehensive plan for Inniskeen village?

Reply: *Following the adoption of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2025-2031, three villages plan's (one in each MD area) will be undertaken per year. The selection of the villages and the order in which these are undertaken will be agreed with Elected Members in each MD area. This is set out in the amended objective below which forms part of the 'Material alterations' document which is currently on public consultation.*

Villages Objectives	
SHO 5	<i>To prepare Tier 4 village plans during the lifetime of this plan, with a focus on housing, amenity, infrastructure, transport and the sustainable reuse and regeneration of existing derelict, vacant, or underutilised sites. At least one village plan will be prepared for a village in each of the three Municipal Districts per annum.</i>

13. In relation to active travel what schemes will work commence on this year 2025 across the county?

Reply:

The following active travel schemes are expected to commence construction in 2025, subject to all statutory processes and project approval guidelines being progressed as required:

TII funded projects:

N2 Cycle path, Emyvale

N2 Cycle path- Corlat RaB to Collegiate College

NTA funded projects

MN/21/0013 Monaghan town Horseshoe Bridge

MN/21/0020 Low-cost junction tightening – Inniskeen and Castleblayney
Mn/23/0102 Woodview to Glen Road

14. In relation to the community involvement scheme CIS, in the interest of transparency, how is it determined which schemes are given priority for works and resurfacing?

Reply: A combination of a cost-benefit analysis, total funding allocation, length of time since the application was submitted and the commitment from the applicant to make the required contribution are all used to decide the most suitable schemes to be brought to construction.

15. In relation to the local lane improvement scheme LIS when will all the new applicants be contacted about their application and when will the lanes be assessed on the ground to check eligibility and condition of the laneway?

Reply: All new applications have undergone a desktop review to ensure that their application complies with the scheme criteria. Letters will be issued to those who have not met the criteria giving them the opportunity to submit further relevant information. It is not envisaged that there will be any further checks on these lanes until the 2017/18 list is exhausted. This is expected to take 4-5 years at the current level of funding.

Cllr A. Campbell will ask:

16. With the recent completion on the Castleblayney Town Centre Lands Regeneration Plan which looked at a number of options to enhance this area, particularly looking at derelict buildings and streetscape.
- (a) What is the next stage of this plan?
 - (b) When will Monaghan County Council be in a position to apply for funding to start this process?

Reply:

- a) Shaffrey Architects were appointed in April 2024 to prepare the regeneration framework plan for the selected area in the centre of Castleblayney. This area is bounded by Main Street to the south, Muckno Street to the east, McGrath Road to the northwest and Monaghan Road to the west.**

The Castleblayney Town Centre Lands Regeneration Plan is a Framework Plan which provides a vision statement supported by project scenarios developed in response to research, survey and analysis of the town centre lands; stakeholder engagement, and development of focused regeneration aims and themes. Further design development and engagement is required if the 10 identified scenarios are to be implemented.

The Council has commenced the engagement process in respect of a number of privately owned sites. The Council will seek to assist these property owners to identify solutions to regenerate these properties.

- b) Private sector investment is required to implement the majority of the identified scenarios. The Council will seek to avail of any suitable funding opportunities once made available.**

17. Regarding staff number within Monaghan County Council:

- (a) How many staff are currently employed with Monaghan County Council at this time compared to 2020?

- Total No. of MCC Employees as at 31st December 2024 = 475 + 60 Retained FF = 535
- Total No. of MCC Employees as at 31st December 2020 = 419 + 51 Retained FF = 470

- (B) How many positions are due and awaiting to be filled by Monaghan County Council?
39 positions are waiting to be filled.

The following appointments are in progress:-

- **Assistant Engineer**
- **Executive Engineer**
- **Staff Officer**
- **Caretaker Buildings outdoor space in Castleblayney**
- **Senior Staff Officer**
- **Environmental Patrol Warden**
- **Traffic Warden**

- (C) What roles are currently available?

- *Dog Warden*
- *Community Climate Action Officer*
- *Machinery Yard Supervisor*
- *Business Advisor*
- *General Operative*
- *Sports Development Officer*
- *ESF & Social Innovation in Sport Officer*
- *Retained (Part-time) Fire Fighter – Carrickmacross Fire Station & Castleblayney Fire Station*
- *Senior Library Assistant*
- *Executive Scientist*
- *Environmental Technician Grade 1*
- *Senior Executive Planner (Public Appointments Service)*
- *Financial Management Accountant (Public Appointments Service)*

18. With regard to the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant: Croí Cónaithe Towns Fund Scheme:

- (a) How many applications have been granted since the scheme was introduced?
202 applications have been approved since the introduction of the scheme.
- (b) How many applications are currently in the pipeline?
102 applications are currently at the assessment stage. In most cases the Council is awaiting the receipt of additional information or clarification on the details submitted.
- (c) What is the total payout on this scheme since it was introduced?
66 applicants have received final payment – these total €3,897,452
- (d) How is Monaghan County Council continuing to promote this scheme?
The Town Regeneration Section are currently working on two promotional videos to be launched on social media in the coming months. Regular updates are provided in the local media and social media platforms on the operation of the scheme. In 2024 152 new applications were received. We are confident of surpassing this figure with 43 applications having been received to date in 2025. The Vacant Homes Officer will continue to engage with the owners of derelict and vacant properties to encourage them to apply for the Croí Cónaithe grant scheme.

19. With the recent submission of Monaghan County Councils Annual Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections plan to the EPA, with priorities going to Waste, Water and Noise:

- (a) What changes have Monaghan County Council made to the submission to help Monaghan County Council improve its Water Quality?
- (b) Has there been comment in relations to having more stakeholder engagement with all those involved in this area?

Reply: The 3rd cycle 'Water Action Plan 2024 – A River Basin Management Plan for Ireland' published in September 2024 sets out a roadmap to restore Ireland's waterbodies to the equivalent of 'good status' or better and to protect water from any further deterioration. Monaghan County Council are one of many implementing bodies who have a role in water quality protection and improvement. Monaghan County Council engage with LAWPRO and other stakeholders at a regional level in relation to the implementation of this plan.

The EPA through the RMCEI process have listed 4 National Enforcement Priorities (NEPs) which focus on delivering positive environmental outcomes for water quality for 2025-2027. Monaghan County Council's actions to improve water quality are focused on the 4 National Enforcement Priorities for Water.

NEP1: Pressures from Agriculture (Farmyards) - slurry/soiled water collection and storage

NEP2: Pressures from Agriculture (Farmland) - slurry and fertiliser spreading.

NEP 3: Discharge Licences/Misconnections

NEP 4: Local Water Quality Pressures including Septic Tanks and Private Water Supplies.

Agricultural Inspections carried out by MCC as part of NEP 1 and NEP 2 are targeted in areas where water quality improvements are required. Water quality data and more detailed data such as the data obtained from the Lough Muck no Road to Recovery project is used to target these inspections in the areas where they are needed. There will be an increased focus on follow up and close out of issues for the 2025-2027 period. In addition to the inspection of farmyards and farmlands, we plan to promote good farming practices through multiple channels, social media, adverts, local radio campaigns and engagement with the farming community.

Discharge licence/misconnection inspections carried out as part of NEP3 are risk-based inspections. Risk is based on several factors e.g. compliance history, scale and nature of the discharge and the sensitivity of the receiving water. For the 2025-2027 period Monaghan County Council aims to improve compliance at licensed sites and to identify further sites which require licensing. Misconnections which are identified to be impacting on water quality will be followed up.

NEP 4, Local Water Quality Pressures including Septic Tanks and Private Water Supplies covers a wide range of activities including the following:

- *The Water Framework Directive River and Lake Monitoring Programme.*
- *Monaghan County Council's own river and amenity water investigation monitoring programmes.*
- *The National Inspection Plan for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems*
- *The Rural Water Monitoring Programme*

Additional local priorities which Monaghan County Council plan to progress further in the 2025-2027 period are the Scots town Blue Dot Project and the Lough Muckno Road to Recovery Project. MCC have engaged with Peace plus projects and it is hoped that that data and work to date in both catchment areas can be fed into the up and coming projects which focus on cross-border collaborative approach to the management and improvement of water quality in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland.

In relation to stakeholder engagement Monaghan County Council collaborate with other water framework directive implementing bodies at a regional level through the border operational committee and at a local level on an ongoing basis.

The 3rd cycle 'Water Action Plan 2024 – A River Basin Management Plan for Ireland' proposes that, "Integrated Catchment Planning: local catchment management plans, which will be sub-plans to the national Plan, will be put in place for each of the 46 catchments. Building over time into fully integrated catchment management plans, these will eventually provide a continuing opportunity for greater public participation and engagement of key stakeholders and sectors at a local and regional level in the ongoing management of catchments and water bodies. "The Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) has been tasked with preparing template Catchment Management Plans and with the establishment of Catchment Community Fora in five Pilot catchments. The Newry, Fane, Glyde and Dee is one of the five pilot catchments. Monaghan County Council will engage with LAWPRO in the development of these plans.

20. How many housing developments in the Castleblayney/Carrickmacross MD are currently in the process of being taken in Charge and when will this process be complete?

Reply:

The are currently eleven taking in charge applications being processed in the Carrickmacross / Castleblayney MD area. Details on these are outlined in the table below.

Development Name	Current Position
Conabury Hill, Castleblayney:	Uisce Eireann have advised that they require the ownership of the wastewater pumping station (WWPS) to be transferred to the Local Authority / UE. The WWPS was built and owned by a company that is now dissolved. The Planning Authority are currently seeking advice on how this matter can be resolved
Killycard (Radhairc an Bhri), Castleblayney	The Planning Authority are awaiting agreement from UE
Bramley Crescent, Castleblayney	The Planning Authority are currently not in a position to confirm a time-frame for the conclusion of this taking in charge process. Outstanding issues relating to land ownership & wayleaves require resolution in order to conclude the process.
Killycard Manor, Castleblayney	The Planning Authority are currently not in a position to confirm a time-frame for the conclusion of this taking in charge process. A number of outstanding matters require resolution by the developer.
Cois Locha, Doohamlet	Local Authority inspections have been completed. Water Services are finalising procurement with respect to the erection of marker posts in the estates. It is anticipated that the intent to take in charge this development can be advertised later in the year.
Alderwood, Carrickmacross	The Local Authority is continuing to liaise with the developer's agent regarding remediation of a number of defects in the estate. Once these matters have been resolved, the intent to take the estate in charge will be advertised.
Blaeberry Walk, Castleblayney	The Planning Authority are unable to put a time-frame on progressing this as there are a number of outstanding matters to be addressed by the developer.

Coill Darach, Castleblayney	The Local Authority has carried out inspections and are now awaiting confirmation from Uisce Eireann that they have no objections to the taking in charge of this development. It is hoped the taking in charge can be progressed to completion later in 2025
Sean Carraig, Carrickmacross	UE has recently agreed to the taking in charge of water and waste services in this development. The intent to take in charge will be advertised in the immediate future.
Lough na Glack, Carrickmacross	The local authority is awaiting the remediation of defects in the estate in relation to public lighting. Once these have been resolved the recommendation to take in charge the estate will be presented to Council
Sliabh Dubh, Corduff:	Sliabh Dubh is served by a standalone wastewater treatment plant which is not maintained by the original developer, this is classed as developer provided infrastructure. Monaghan County Council has previously intervened and carried out remedial works relating to this plant when a public health matter has arisen. In a letter to Local Authorities in 2024, Uisce Eireann have advised that they been assigned responsibility for the remediation of developer provided infrastructure. They further advised that this will take time to resolve and that a range of resolution options are likely to be considered and used. No further update from UE is available at this time

CLlr S. Conlon will ask:

21. What is the total accumulated value of current funding requests submitted to Transport Infrastructure Ireland, National Transport Authority and Department of Transport by Monaghan County Council for road and Active Travel projects that are delayed until the requisite finances are approved, and to itemise each project.

Reply:

The total Transport Infrastructure Ireland budget allocation for 2025 is €1.9M. This allocation is divided as follows-

N2 Cycle path- Corlett RaB to Collegiate College = €300,000

N2 Cycle path- Ballyalbanny Junction to Coolshannagh RaB = €100,000

N2 Coolshannagh RaB to Corlat RaB = €50,000

N2 Cycle path, Emyvale = €300,000

Ulster Canal Greenway- Smithborough to Clones = €75,000

Ulster Canal Greenway- Monaghan to NI Border = €1,000,000

Ulster Canal Greenway- Smithborough to Monaghan = €75,000.

The NTA have confirmed the allocation for 2025 of €2.5 million for Active Travel Schemes.

An allocation is being provided of €500,000 in respect of a "Bus Stop Enhancement Programme", which is intended to allow the upgrade of bus stops in various locations across the county, including the installation of bus poles and hardstanding areas, plus bus shelters in agreed locations. The NTA have they are in the process of identifying locations across the county and will be agreed with MCC in advance of any construction commencing under this programme.

The below table outlines the status of the active projects that the Active Travel unit are continuing to work on. It outlines the various stages they are currently at, where we expect to be at the end of the 2025.

NTA Active Travel Investment Grants: 2025 Allocations					
Project Code:	Project Name	2025 Allocation	Estimated Total expenditure to complete Project	NTA Phase Mar 2025	Expected NTA Phase Q4 2025
MN/21/0001	Upgrade of Monaghan Town Greenway	€ 30,000	€30,000	5	7
MN/21/0010	Carrickmacross - Castleblaney Rd Active Travel Scheme	€ 140,000	€780,000	2	4
MN/21/0013	Monaghan Town Horseshoe Bridge Active Travel Measures	€ 1,075,000	€ 1,075,000	5	6
MN/21/0014	Monaghan Town Ballyalbany Bridge Active Travel Measures	€ 50,000	€950,000	5	5
MN/21/0020	Low-Cost Junction Tightening/Pedestrian Crossing Schemes	€ 160,000	€160,000	5	7
MN/22/0001	Clones Peace Link Active Travel Scheme	€ 50,000	€50,000	6	7
MN/22/0003	Staff Costs AT Team	€ 270,000	ongoing	N/A	N/A
MN/22/0004	Lough Egish Village	€ 25,000	€25,000	6	7
MN/23/0007	Carrickmacross R178/Oriel Road Active Travel Scheme	€ 35,000	€573,130	2	4
MN/23/0008	Monaghan Town Cootehill Road Active Travel Measures	€ 135,000	€325,000	2	4
MN/23/0009	Inniskeen Village Active Travel	€ 60,000	€175,000	2	4
MN/23/0010	Tullyhirm Lane	€ 125,000	€125,000	1	4
MN/23/0013	SRTS Round 2 - Beech Hill College, Tirkeenan	€ 20,000	€75,000	2	3
MN/23/0016	SRTS Round 1 - St Louis GNS & St Louis Infant School - Monaghan	€ 45,000	€75,000	3	5
MN/23/0017	SRTS Round 2 - St Marys Boys NS	€ 10,000	€50,000	1	3
MN/23/0019	Ulster Canal Greenway Link (Canal Street)	€ 60,000	€60,000	1	3
MN/23/0102	Woodview to Glen Road connectivity - Monaghan Town	€ 210,000	€210,000	5	6
MN/25/xxxx	SRTS Round 3 - Killeevan NS HSR* NS HSR*	N/A*	TBC	Waiting info from NTA	

Total – Active Travel Investment Grant		€2,500,000	<u>€4,738,300</u>		
MN/24/xxxx	Bus Stop Enhancement Programme	€500,000	<u>TBC</u>	Waiting info from NTA	
MN/22/0002	Monaghan Town Local Transport Plan	€40,000	<u>N/A</u>		
MN/23/0020	Urban Mobility/Sustainability Active Travel Plans for Castleblayney, Ballybay, Clones, & Carrickmacross	€30,000	<u>N/A</u>		
Total:		<u>€3,070,000</u>			

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

Cllr S. Flynn will ask:

- 22.** Can Monaghan County Council provide an update on the number of properties that have been purchased under the Tenant in Situ scheme in County Monaghan over the past year?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council purchased 4 Tenant in Situ properties in 2024.*

- 23.** Additionally, can Monaghan County Council outline any challenges it has faced in acquiring properties through the scheme and clarify whether recent changes to the schemes operation have impacted its effectiveness in preventing evictions?

Reply: *Where there is a no-fault eviction, and the landlord is willing to sell the property to Monaghan County Council, there are no major challenges. The Department of Housing will be sending a Circular in the coming weeks outlining the process for all acquisition during 2025.*

22. Notices of Motion

Cllr. R. Aughey requested that consideration of Notice of Motion 22 (1) be withdrawn. This was agreed.

In the absence of Cllr S. Coyle, consideration of Notice of Motion 22(2) was deferred to the May Council meeting.

The Sinn Féin party members requested that consideration of Notice of Motion 22(3) be deferred to the May Council meeting. This was agreed.

23. Votes of sympathy/congratulations

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

- Michelle Mulligan, Staff Officer, Housing on the death of her sister Margaret Coster (née Cassidy) 40 Griffin Rath, Manor, Maynooth, Co Kildare and formerly Drummons, Scotstown, Co Monaghan.

- Cllr. Sinead Flynn on the death of her aunt Kathleen Hand, Carnowen, Smithborough, Co. Monaghan.

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

- Shane McLoughlin, Clones, for recently achieving yet another entry to the Guinness World Records pulling a 40-tonne truck in New York.
- Scoil Mhuire na mBuachaillí, Castleblayney, on winning the credit union chapter level quiz and performing brilliantly in the All-Ireland Quiz Final.

24. Conferences

On the proposal of Cllr C. Carthy seconded by Cllr P. Conlon it was agreed that the Council be represented at the following training events by the members listed below:

Promoting Authority	Subject/Theme	Venue	Dates	Members Selected
AILG	AILG Association's 2025 Annual Training Conference – Re Local Government of the Next Generation	Limerick Strand Hotel	02 & 03 April	Cllr. N. McCooey Cllr. S. Flynn Cllr. B. McAree Cllr. S. Conlon Cllr. P. Treanor Cllr. N. Keelan
IPI	Annual Planning Conference	Salthill Hotel, Galway	10 & 11 April	Cllr. S. Conlon
Mary Robinson	Courage in Crisis – Climate & Nature	Ballina, Co. Mayo	26 & 27 May	Cllr. R. Truell

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Signed: _____
Meetings
Administrator

Date: _____