

Minutes of Strategic Policy Committee (Economic Development & Enterprise Support) meeting

held 30th April 2025 @ 4pm in Council Chamber at MTek 1

In attendance:

Cllr. Sean Gilliland (Chair)	Monaghan County Council
Cllr. Niamh McCooey	Monaghan County Council
Cllr. P.J. O'Hanlon	Monaghan County Council
Mr. Peter McMahon	Business/Commercial Reps
Ms. Eileen Collery	Business/Commercial Reps
Mr. Ciaran McEntee	PPN - Environment Electoral College
Mr. Adrian Hughes	Senior Planner, Planning Section
Ms. Angela Gallagher	Administrative Officer, Planning Section
Ms. Denise O'Neill	Assistant Staff Officer, Planning Section
Ms. Michelle Boyle	Senior Staff Officer, Finance Section
Ms. Siobhan McKenna	Revenue Collector, Finance Section
Ms. Collette Murray	Staff Officer, Finance Section
Mr. Brian Annon	Executive Engineer, Town Regeneration
Mr. Drew Hurley	Senior Executive Planner, Town Regeneration

MS Teams:

Cllr. Colm Carthy	Monaghan County Council
Ms. Grainne McNamee	Assistant Staff Officer, Planning Section
Mr. Kevin Dowds	Assistant Staff Officer, Planning Section

Apologies:

Ms. Olga McConnon	DoS, Finance, Housing & Cultural
Mr. Cathal Flynn	DoS, Planning, Econ Dev, Fire, Building, Capital, Corporate
Cllr. Pat Treanor	Monaghan County Council
Cllr. Peter Conlon	Monaghan County Council
Mr. Peadar Black	PPN- Community and Vol or Social Inclusion Electoral College
Mr. Tom Treanor	Agri/Farming

1. Adoption of Previous Minutes held on 26th February 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th February 2025 were proposed by Cllr. Niamh McCooey and seconded by Ms. Eileen Collery.

2. Matters Arising

None.

3. Rates Vacancy Abatement Scheme & Scheme for Waiver of Rates

Ms. Michelle Boyle introduced a presentation on the Vacant Properties Rates Abatement Scheme and the Scheme for the Waiver of Rates. Ms. Boyle advised that Public Consultations regarding the two schemes had taken place since the last Strategic Policy Committee (S.P.C.) meeting in February.

Ms. Siobhan McKenna outlined both schemes advising that a presentation to the Senior Management Team would provisionally take place in June this year. It is hoped that the schemes would then be approved by Monaghan County Council (M.C.C.) at a monthly meeting prior to the statutory budget meeting, provisionally in September.

Cllr P.J. O'Hanlon asked if the proposed schemes were National Schemes? He also queried if all owners of the vacant properties had been contacted and asked what the procedure was in relation to derelict sites?

Ms. Boyle confirmed that the scheme was a National Scheme and stated that revenue collectors had done a lot of work over the last number of years trying to make contact with all vacant property owners.

Mr. Brian Annon, Executive Engineer, in response to Cllr O'Hanlon's query stated that the Town Regeneration team issues a Notice of Intention letter and erects a Derelict Sites Notice on the same day.

Cllr. Niamh McCooey asked who would be liable for payment of the 20% of the rates if a property was sold to a new owner?

Ms. Boyle responded saying that solicitors would normally deal with historical bills as part of the sale adding that if a new owner was bringing it back into use, they would get 100% abatement.

Ms. Eileen Collery requested that a reference be made in the policy that properties would be charged the vacancy rate or the derelict site levy but not both?

Ms. Boyle agreed to amend the policy to include this.

Cllr. P.J. O'Hanlon asked if commercial properties in the town centres could be bought and turned into residential accommodation? He also queried if members could be informed of any planning applications that request a change of use from commercial to residential?

Cllr Sean Gilliland commended the teams in both the Rates Section and the Town Regeneration team for their work in trying to locate the owners of vacant properties and endorsed making every effort to contact landowners.

In response, Mr. Adrian Hughes, Senior Planner stated that any applications that require planning will be assessed against the policies and the standards that apply. He advised that it was policy to facilitate mixed use in town centres. Mr Hughes added that it was a complex area but agreed to meet with Cllr. O'Hanlon and Cllr. Sean Gilliland before the next S.P.C. meeting to discuss the issue.

Mr. Peter McMahon mentioned the vibrancy of the town centres and said derelict buildings needed to be cleaned up to regenerate the town centres.

Cllr. Gilliland stated that Monaghan County Council was very town-centre orientated in comparison to towns in other counties. He recommended that upper floors of properties in town centres be utilised as residential whilst maintaining retail units on the ground floors.

Mr. Adrian Hughes stated that it was important to acknowledge that there had been a shift at national and local level in relation to policy and funding. He mentioned the establishment of the Town Regeneration team who were doing significant work and added that Monaghan was one of the few counties that had been successful in maintaining a strong town centre.

Mr. Ciaran McEntee welcomed the scheme for the Waiver of Rates whilst Cllr. Sean Gilliland said the scheme would help new businesses.

4. Derelict Sites Policy Review & update of Croí Cónaithe grant

Mr. Brian Annon, Executive Engineer with the Town Regeneration team gave a presentation on the Proposed Policy and Procedures to deal with Dereliction and Vacancy in County Monaghan and gave an update on the Croí Cónaithe Property Refurbishment Grant. He advised that there was a long series of interaction with the owners of properties before properties were deemed derelict.

Mr. Ciaran McEntee welcomed the scheme stating that it was a positive thing if idle properties could be brought back into use for housing.

Cllr. Colm Carthy stated that whilst it was important that the policy was being used to deal with dereliction and vacancy, he said he needed reassurance that the scheme was not being used to make money.

Mr. Annon responded saying that if a property is on the Derelict Sites Register from 1st January in any given year, they would be subject to the 7% levy of the value of the property. The owners would have received notices prior to 1st January stating this would be the case.

Mr. Peter McMahon commended the work of the team in relation to Muckno Street in Castleblayney but raised concerns about who was availing of the grant and the number of people living in certain properties?

In response, Mr Annon stated that the grant was only available to individuals and added that applicants could only avail of two grant. One property would have to become their primary residence while another property could avail of the grant and be rented out.

Mr Adrian Hughes commented that where there is overcrowding issues that the local authority should be notified in order to conduct inspections. He added that M.C.C. would work with local people in these areas to see what the problems were and to find solutions but could only do so if they were aware of the issues.

Mr. Drew Hurley, Senior Executive Planner highlighted that property owners would have to register the tenancy with the Residential Tenancies Board (R.T.B.) if they intended to rent out their properties after receiving the grant.

Cllr Sean Gilliland concluded the discussion by stating that the Croí Cónaithe grant was a very successful grant that had transformed towns and given young people the opportunity to get on the property ladder. He said it was important to recognise the work and effort of the team overseeing it and urged those in attendance that where there were issues with properties that the local authority and other agencies should be notified.

5. AOB

Mr. Ciaran McEntee raised the issue of traffic congestion on the Clones Road in Monaghan town.

Mr. Adrian Hughes responded saying there had been engagement with the Roads Section in M.C.C. in relation to the issue. He recommended that Kevin West, Acting Senior Engineer come to the next S.P.C. meeting to update members on the progress being made.

Mr. Hughes also highlighted the availability of a Derelict Sites Register online for the public when Ms. Eileen Collery queried if the information conveyed at the meeting in relation to derelict properties was confidential.

Ms. Angela Gallagher confirmed that both presentations would be circulated to the S.P.C. members.

Cllr. Sean Gilliland agreed to invite Kevin West to the next meeting in September. He also conveyed get well messages to S.P.C. committee member Tom Treanor.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 24th September 2025 at 4pm.