Minutes of the Special Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Council Chamber, M-Tek Building, Armagh Rd, Knockaconny, Monaghan, on Monday 20th July 2026 at 2.00p.m.

Chair: Cllr A. Campbell, Cathaoirleach

Present: Cllrs Aughey, Carthy, Clerkin, P. Conlon, S. Conlon, Flynn, Gibbons, Gilliland, Johnston, Keelan, McAree, McCooey, O'Hanlon, P. Treanor, S. Treanor and Truell.

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

Apology: Cllr Coyle

The Cathaoirleach welcomed all those present to the meeting and outlined that the purpose of the special meeting is to consider the proposed Civic Offices project. He noted that, following the July Council Meeting, elected members had been afforded additional time to consider the proposal and had been given the opportunity to submit questions to the Executive, all of which had been responded to. The Cathaoirleach thanked the Executive for their work in preparing and providing responses to members' queries. He then invited the Chief Executive to address the meeting.

The Chief Executive referred to the documents circulated with the agenda, including the presentation on the proposed Civic Offices project, the Final Business Case, and the responses provided to members' questions. He advised that the Executive would be available to provide clarification and respond to any additional queries that members might have during the course of the meeting.

The Cathaoirleach then proceeded with the consideration of the Final Business Case for the Civic Offices Project and invited members to make their contributions.

1. **To approve final business case for Civic Offices Project**

   Cllr. P. Treanor, speaking on behalf of the Sinn Féin Party, stated that the documentation provided by the Executive had been reviewed in detail and he expressed the party's full support for the proposed Civic Offices Project. He referred to previous proposals to develop a civic headquarters during his tenure as an elected member and noted that, had a decision been taken at an earlier stage, the Council could already be benefiting from savings on rental accommodation costs. He commended the Executive and the Civic Offices Steering Committee on the comprehensive information provided and confirmed that the Sinn Féin Party is in favour of the project proceeding.

   Cllr. S. Treanor referred to the July Council Meeting held on 6 July, at which the estimated cost of the proposed Civic Offices Project was outlined as €46.5 million. He called for the proposal to be put on hold to avoid placing any undue burden on ratepayers. While acknowledging the excellent work carried out by the Council despite its limited financial resources, he expressed concern that annual loan repayments of approximately €2 million could impact on service delivery. He further requested that a roll-call vote be taken when the matter was put to a decision.

Cllr P.J. O'Hanlon commended the Cathaoirleach for the fair and balanced manner in which the proposal had been managed and thanked the Executive for the detailed responses provided to the questions he had submitted in advance of the meeting. Cllr O'Hanlon stated that the rationale for office consolidation was based on assumptions that larger centralised office buildings deliver efficiency savings, improved collaboration and reduced property costs. However, he stated that such assumptions are increasingly being challenged by developments in hybrid working, digital service delivery, artificial intelligence and rising construction costs. He questioned whether a major office development represented the optimum use of public capital and outlined a number of concerns, including:

- The potential for construction cost increases and inflationary pressures between project approval and completion, together with future maintenance and refurbishment costs.
- The impact of hybrid working arrangements on long-term office accommodation requirements and the need for occupancy and utilisation data to inform decision-making.
- The potential effect of advances in artificial intelligence on future administrative and accommodation requirements within local authorities.
- The opportunity cost associated with the project and whether investment could instead be directed towards priorities such as housing delivery, roads, active travel, town centre regeneration, climate adaptation and digital transformation.

Cllr O'Hanlon queried the total interest payable on the proposed €38 million loan and concluded by stating that he would not be in support of the Civic Offices Project proceeding.

Cllr Gilliland, on behalf of the Fine Gael Party, thanked his party colleagues for their work in reviewing the documentation relating to the proposed Civic Offices Project and confirmed the party's support for the proposal. He noted that the need for new office accommodation and the consolidation of Council services had been identified for a number of years and highlighted the challenges associated with services and staff being dispersed across multiple locations. He stated that the current accommodation was not fit for purpose and referenced the positive cost-benefit analysis, which indicated that the project would not place an additional burden on ratepayers. Cllr. Gilliland also referred to the significant growth and development experienced across County Monaghan in recent years and expressed the view that the proposed Civic Offices Project would provide modern, fit-for-purpose accommodation to support staff, elected members, businesses and the wider community into the future. He further highlighted the benefits of having Council services located in a single centralised location to improve accessibility and customer service. He concluded by confirming the Fine Gael Party's support for the Civic Offices Project proceeding.

Cllr. Johnston expressed his support for the proposed Civic Offices Project and referred to the recommendation of the Executive and the findings of the Final Business Case, which concluded that the project represented the most economically advantageous option for the Council. He noted that the Executive had provided a balanced assessment of both the benefits and risks associated with the proposal and had recommended that it proceed. He acknowledged the contribution of previous elected members in advancing the project to the design stage and in making financial provision for its future delivery. As a member of the Civic Offices Steering Committee and former member of the Audit

Committee, he stated that the project had been managed in accordance with high standards of governance and financial oversight, with a continued focus on value for money and cost control. He welcomed the contingency funding included within the project budget and the commitment to explore additional contingency measures. Cllr. Johnston also highlighted the long-term financial benefits of the project, including the elimination of rental costs, and noted that the information provided indicated that the project would not result in increases in commercial rates, Local Property Tax or impacts on service delivery. He concluded by thanking the Executive and all involved in the process and reiterated his support for the project proceeding.

Cllr. Aughey advised the meeting that Cllr. Coyle, who was unable to attend the meeting, wished to have his support for the proposed Civic Offices Project formally recorded. Cllr. Aughey also expressed his support for the project, highlighting the benefits of consolidating Council services in a single location and the improved efficiencies and synergies this would provide for staff, elected members and service users. He welcomed the confirmation that the project would not place an additional burden on ratepayers and thanked the Executive for facilitating the Special Meeting and for responding to members' queries. He also welcomed the contingency funding included within the project budget and acknowledged the work undertaken by the Executive, the Capital Projects Team and all staff involved in advancing the project Cllr. Aughey referred to the length of time it had taken to reach this stage and expressed the view that the proposed Civic Offices would provide a modern corporate headquarters of which the Council could be proud, while also providing a suitable venue for welcoming visitors and dignitaries in the future.

Cllr. McCooey thanked the Executive, the Capital Projects Team, the Planning Team and members of the Civic Offices Steering Committee for their professionalism, commitment and work in progressing the proposed Civic Offices Project. She acknowledged that the proposal represented a significant investment of public funds and emphasised the importance of elected members carefully considering all available information before reaching a decision. Having reviewed the Final Business Case and the responses provided to members' queries, she stated that the proposal represented the most favourable long-term option when compared with retaining the Council's existing dispersed accommodation arrangements. She referred to the ongoing costs associated with the current accommodation portfolio, including rental expenditure and the investment required to maintain existing facilities, and noted that the information provided indicated that the proposed borrowing would not adversely affect service delivery or other planned capital projects. Cllr. McCooey also referred to the positive findings of the independent cost-benefit analysis and noted that the project had been subject to extensive examination, financial appraisal and governance oversight over a number of years. She concluded by expressing her support for the Civic Offices Project proceeding.

Cllr. Carthy referred to the long-term financial analysis undertaken as part of the project, noting that the costs associated with maintaining the current dispersed accommodation model, including rent, lease agreements and capital upgrades, would continue to increase over time. He highlighted the financial benefits of the proposed Civic Offices Project, including the reduction in accommodation-related costs over the longer term, and noted that the project would result in savings for ratepayers following the repayment period. Cllr. Carthy also referred to recent increases in rental costs and the risks associated with continuing to rely on leased accommodation and multiple office locations. He stated that, while there were risks associated with proceeding with the project, there were also significant risks associated with the ‘do minimum’ option. Having considered the information provided and the alternative options available, he concluded by expressing his support for the Civic Offices Project proceeding.

Responding to a query from Cllr. P.J. O’Hanlon, Ms. O. McConnon, Director of Services, advised that the proposed €38 million loan was based on an interest rate of 3.3% over a 30-year period, with total interest repayments estimated at €22 million.

The Chief Executive thanked the elected members for their engagement with the proposal and for the considered manner in which they had approached the decision-making process. He acknowledged that the Civic Offices Project represented a significant investment and noted the importance of the scrutiny and questions raised by members throughout the process. He advised that the role of the Executive was to provide members with the necessary information, analysis and recommendation to assist in their deliberations. He highlighted the need to balance ambition with prudence and noted that, if approved, the project would provide Monaghan County Council with a modern, fit-for-purpose headquarters for elected members, staff and the public, while also addressing the challenges associated with the Council’s current dispersed accommodation arrangements. He referred to the extensive work undertaken over a number of years, including business case development, financial appraisal, planning and governance processes, and acknowledged the contribution of the Civic Offices Steering Committee, elected members, senior management and staff involved in the project. He advised that, should the project proceed, the Council would move into a new phase requiring continued oversight and robust financial management, with a particular focus on risk mitigation, project governance and the management of contingencies. He stated that regular updates would be provided to members and that the Executive would maintain close oversight of the project. The Chief Executive further noted that delays in progressing major capital projects can result in increased costs and emphasised the importance of reaching a decision on the proposal. He concluded by reiterating the Executive’s recommendation that the project proceed.

The Cathaoirleach expressed his appreciation to the elected members, the Executive and all staff involved in advancing the proposed Civic Offices Project to its current stage. He acknowledged the significant work undertaken throughout the process and invited the elected members to determine whether the Civic Offices Project should proceed.

Responding to a query from Cllr. S. Treanor, Ms. O. McConnon, Director of Services, advised that the overall project cost, as set out in the Tender Report, amounted to €43.57 million and included professional fees.

Cllr A. Johnston proposed, Cllr N. McCooey seconded that this Council approve the final business case for the Civic Offices Project.

A recorded vote was taken which resulted as follows:
For: Cllrs R. Aughey, A. Campbell, C. Carthy, P. Clerkin, P. Conlon, S. Conlon, S. Flynn, P. Gibbons, S. Gilliland, A. Johnston, N. Keelan, B. McAree, N. McCooey, P. Treanor and R. Truell.
Total: 15
Against: Cllrs PJ O’Hanlon and S. Treanor
Total: 2

The Cathaoirleach declared the proposal carried.

(i) To consider borrowing an amount of €38 million for the purpose of constructing new civic offices

Cllr N. McCooey proposed, Cllr A. Johnston seconded that this Council approve borrowing €38 million for the purpose of constructing new civic offices.

A vote by show of hands was taken which resulted in, 15 For, 2 Against.

The Cathaoirleach declared the proposal carried.

2. Responses to Members' Questions

SF Party Questions – Q1 to Q10 ('SF Questions')

1. ***Can the Executive give members a breakdown of all rents that have been paid out by MCC over the last 10 years for use of buildings that will no longer be required if we proceed with new office project?***

Response provided by the Executive (Finance):

Rental MTEK I & II Jan 2015-Dec 2025	€ 2,334,826
Rental Motor Tax Jan 2015-Dec 2025	€ 661,581
	€ 2,996,407

2. ***Can the council, using inflation calculations and expected increases, outline the expected costs of rent over the next 10 & 30 year periods if we decide not to proceed with the new office project (also taking into account expected increases in staff)?***

Response provided by the Executive (Finance):

The expected cost of rent for the next 10-year period if we decide not to proceed with the new office project (also taking into account expected increases in staff) is €4.6m. The expected cost of rent for the next 30-year period if we decide not to proceed with the new office project (also taking into account expected increases in staff) is €24.2m.

3. ***The report concludes that the Financial Net Present Value of the project is negative by approximately €4.2 million, yet the Economic Net Present Value is positive by €21.6 million. For the benefit of members of the Council and the public, could you explain in straightforward terms how both of these statements can be true, and why the project is still considered to represent good value for money?***

Response provided by the Executive (Finance):

In simple terms a Financial NPV looks only at the actual cash flowing in and out of the project while an Economic NPV adds wider social and economic benefits. From a calculation perspective, the main difference in the two figures above is the inclusion of the Economic benefits figure of €29,889k in the Economic NPV. This is outlined in Section 6.3 of the Final Business Case. For a full reconciliation of the two metrics, please see explanation below.

The variance table at the end of this response shows the variances between the Economic NPV and Financial NPV by line item. Both columns show the incremental benefit/ cost for the two options discounted by 4% for the Economic appraisal and 3.52% for the financial appraisal. The main differences between the Financial NPV and Economic NPV is that:

The Economic NPV includes the Economic Benefits of €29,889 outlined in section 6.3.1 of the Final Business Case. (+€29,889k).

- The capital cost included in the Economic NPV calculation excludes Vat, Contingency and inflation provision (+€4,321k)
- The operating savings included in the Economic NPV calculation excludes Vat and inflation provision (-€7,533k)

See tables below including Finance NPV calculated by line item and variance with Economic NPV by line item.

Financial NPV (Nominal values)

Metric	Glen HQ (Do Minimum) €000	Civic Office €000	Incremental Benefits of Civic Office over Glen HQ €000
Residual Value	€576	€20,344	€19,768
Capital Costs	-€12,135	-€44,009	-€31,874
Operating Savings	€2,215	€37,365	€35,150
Lifecycle Costs	-€6,154	-€6,270	-€116
Net Cash Flow	**-€15,498**	**€7,430**	**€22,928**
Gross Financial NPV (3.52%)	**-€13,799**	**-€17,961**	**-€4,162**

Financial NPV (3.52% NPV rate applied to each line item)

Metric	Glen HQ (Do Minimum) €000	Civic Office €000	Incremental Benefits of Civic Office over Glen HQ €000
Residual Value	€204	€7,206	€7,002
Capital Costs	-€11,409	-€41,783	-€30,374
Operating Savings	€1,120	€20,314	€19,194
Lifecycle Costs	-€3,729	-€3,713	€16
Gross Financial NPV (3.52%)	**-€13,799**	**-€17,961**	**-€4,162**

Economic Appraisal

Metric	Glen HQ (Do Minimum) €000 PV	Civic Office €000 PV	Incremental Benefits of Civic Office over Glen HQ €000 PV
Cumulative Benefits	0	€29,889	€29,889
Capital Costs	-€9,919	-€35,972	-€26,053
Operating Savings	€791	€12,466	€11,675
Lifecycle Costs	-€3,494	-€3,465	€29
Residual Value	€178	€6,272	€6,095
NPV			**€21,634**
BCR			**1.8**
Incremental IRR			**9%**

Variance table

Metric	Financial NPV	Economic NPV	Variance
Cumulative Benefits	0	€29,889	€29,889
Capital Costs	-€30,374	-€26,053	€4,321
Operating Savings	€19,194	€11,675	-€7,519
Lifecycle Costs	€16	€29	€13
Residual Value	€7,002	€6,095	-€907
Total	**-€4,162**	**€21,634**	**€25,796**

4. ***The report refers to benefits such as improved staff collaboration, reduced travel between offices, increased organisational efficiency and improved working conditions. How were these benefits assessed and quantified within the business case, and how will the Council measure whether these anticipated benefits have actually been achieved once the building is operational?***

   Response provided by the Executive (Finance):

   The fragmented locations and spread of staff across multiple sites does not create a cohesive organisation. By consolidating four offices spaces into one, this will naturally improve staff collaboration, reduced travel between offices, increased organisational efficiency and improved working conditions. In the Final Business Case (FBC), this has been quantified using research from Matrix Leadership Networks and Human Synergistics Australia that provide frameworks for understanding and improving organizational culture. Staff Turnover, Wasted Time, Rework, Stress and Absenteeism have an economic impact on an organisation through inefficiencies linked to suboptimal working environments which could represent up to 29.35% of payroll cost at the lower bound of estimates. For the FBC, it is recognised that not all of these efficiencies will be realised in practice therefore the consultants have been prudent to only used 25% of the 29.35% potential Organisational Efficiency and Productivity Benefits, to calculate the Efficiency Savings.

   These benefits can be measured through KPIs such as staff retention rates, Travel and Subsistence costs and sick leave metrics.

5. ***What are the Council's long-term plans for the existing Civic Offices at The Glen and any other buildings that will become surplus to operational requirements? Have potential disposal values or alternative uses already been factored into the financial appraisal?***

   Response provided by the Executive (Finance):

   Should the proposed Civic Offices project proceed, The Glen offices and adjoining lands will likely be sold on the open market. The decision to progress the proposed Civic Offices project doesn't affect the operations of any other Council owned property. However, MCC have identified other properties that are surplus to operational requirements that could be disposed of. Valuations have been obtained for three properties that could potentially be disposed of, including the Glen offices and site.

   These potential disposals proceeds have not been factored into the financial appraisal. However, the proceeds from sale of surplus assets will be used to fund an additional contingency of €1.7m for this project, if required.

   If The Glen site were to be developed for housing purposes, the Council would benefit from additional LPT income. A conservate estimate of additional LPT income is included in the operational variance figures in the FBC. Refer to table 11.

6. ***Can the executive confirm if the proposed borrowing will have any impact on:***
   - ***Current capital projects planned across the county?***
   - ***Our ability to deliver on our roads programmes?***
   - ***Our ability to deliver our social and affordable housing targets?***

   Response provided by the Executive (Finance):

   Borrowing of €38m at 3.3% fixed interest rate over a 30-year term equates to an annual loan repayment of €2.09m. The current annual provision of €1.5 million plus the expected cost savings of €648k leaves a surplus of 58k after annual loan repayments.

   Therefore, it is envisaged that the proposed loan repayments for the proposed Civic Offices would not have an adverse impact on capital projects, our ability to deliver on our roads programmes or our ability to deliver our social and affordable housing targets.

7. ***The preferred bidder has proposed a number of value engineering opportunities that were not included within the tender price. Could you explain what these proposals involve, how much additional savings they might realistically generate, and whether any of them would have an impact on the quality, specification or lifespan of the finished building?***
   Response from the Executive (Capital Projects):
   See Value Engineering Table – Appendix 2.

8. ***Having considered the procurement process, financial appraisal, economic appraisal and the independent evaluation of the tenders, could you summarise for members and the public why the Executive is recommending that this Council proceed with Tender 2, and why it believes this represents the best long-term investment for County Monaghan?***
   Response from the Executive (Capital Projects):
   While Tenderer 3 achieved the highest score under the Price criterion, the tender did not achieve equivalent scores under the Quality criterion. In contrast, Tenderer 2 submitted a more comprehensive and project-specific technical proposal, demonstrating a stronger understanding of the project requirements, site constraints, delivery methodology and risk management approach.

   The Evaluation Team considered that Tenderer 2's submission provided a greater level of confidence in the ability of the tenderer to successful delivery the project in accordance with the Employer's Requirements. When both the Price and Quality assessments were combined in accordance with the published MEAT evaluation methodology, Tenderer 2 achieved the highest overall score and was therefore identified as the Most Economically Advantageous Tender.

   The evaluation was not based solely on the lowest tender price; rather, it was based on the combination of price and quality criteria that had been established and published before tenders were received, ensuring a fair, transparent and robust procurement process.
   Response provided by the Executive (Finance):
   - The "do minimum" option still requires significant financial investment and would still not provide a fit-for-purpose facility.
   - One of the major operational costs, rent would continue to increase over time to a conservative projected annual cost of €1.48m *(including inflation)* in 30 years' time.
   - A fixed interest rate loan can be obtained from the Housing Finance Agency which provides certainty over future repayments. The burden of this repayment reduces over time due to inflation and expected growth in the Revenue budget.
   - Proceeding with the new civic offices project represents a Benefit Cost Ratio of 1.8, indicating that the benefits of the project outweigh the associated costs in comparison to the Do Minimum option.
   - MCC would fully own a strategic asset in 30 years' time, when the loan is repaid.
   - This major investment in a key local authority asset would realise economic benefits for Co. Monaghan, as set out in the Final Business Case.

9. ***If we agree to proceed with this project on 20-07-26, when does the executive, realistically, believe works can begin and what would be the expected completion date?***
   Response from the Executive (Capital Projects):
   If the Elected Members decide to proceed to construction of the proposed Civic Offices, it is expected the Works Contract will begin on site in September/October 2026. The expected completion date / occupation is Q1 2029.

10. ***How much does the executive envisage paying to upgrade existing accommodation, if this project does not go ahead?***
    Response from the Executive (Capital Projects):
    Estimated Capital Cost to upgrade The Glen Offices is €12m excluding decanting and rental costs during the renovation construction period (estimated 24 months). *See FG Questions Q1 response for more detail.*

FG Party Questions – Q1 to Q15 ('FG Questions')

1. ***In addition to retrofit capital costs of at least €12m for the Glen offices, can a best estimate be made on the financial impact a retrofit would have on operating costs such as the need to relocate staff for a prolonged period of time; additional rents, lost productivity, reduction in delivery of services?***

Response provided by the Executive (Finance):
If the Glen site was fully vacated for the retrofit, 120 staff would have to be temporally relocated. Market enquiries indicate finding rental space for 120 staff, with customer facing facilities, disabled accessibility, parking and adequate IT infrastructure is not readily available in Monaghan Town.

Estimating a two-year retrofit for relocation of staff with rental cost based on existing rental charges incurred by MCC for rental office space (subject to availability) and estimated IT costs:

No of Staff impacted The Glen	**120.00**
Decanting to/from	€ 60,000.00
Rental Space Year 1	€ 371,697.00
Rental Space Year 2	€ 371,697.00
IT WAN 20K pa	€ 40,000.00
IT Infrastructure Estimate	€ 50,000.00
Total	**€ 893,394.00**

If there was a phased retrofit this would somewhat ease the challenge of finding rental space for 120 staff at once, however finding rental accommodation for approximately 60 staff on a phased basis, would be very challenging in the Monaghan town area. Other challenges include continuity of services, IT infrastructure considerations, reduced meetings space and staff engagement along with increase in travel expenses. Also phased construction would increase construction costs due to additional health and safety provisions required to protect staff and public while works take place and facilitate public-facing operations.

2. ***How disruptive would a retrofit of the Glen offices be operationally?***

Response provided by the Executive (Finance):
As outlined in Q1 FG Questions above, there are potentially two options; fully vacating The Glen or implementing a phased vacation of the building. Both options would be highly disruptive to the 120 staff currently based at The Glen, as well as to members of the public who use our services.

Business continuity would be significantly affected, with staff experiencing considerable challenges in carrying out their roles effectively. Market enquiries indicate that there is currently no suitable alternative office accommodation available that could facilitate either the full or partial relocation of staff from The Glen. A retrofit programme would further increase the dispersal of staff across multiple locations, creating additional operational challenges. Furthermore, the limited availability of meeting facilities and public-facing space would have a direct impact on service delivery and staff's ability to conduct their work efficiently.

There would also be significant challenges relating to IT infrastructure. Our IT servers are currently located on site, and a retrofit project would present substantial logistical difficulties in maintaining uninterrupted IT services throughout the works. Relocating the servers would incur significant costs and could increase the risk of service disruption during the transition period.

3. ***If the project does not go ahead, how much more rent would need to be paid on additional office space on assumed employee growth over the next 30 years? Best estimate is fine.***
   Response provided by the Executive (Finance):
   €24.2m including conservative growth in staff numbers and inflation.
4. ***Are there any onerous leases with Motor Tax office or MTek? i.e. can we realise rental savings in year 1 of occupation on the new offices or are we tied into onerous leases?***
   Response provided by the Executive (Finance):
   MCC have rolling leases for the MTEK Buildings and can be vacated with notice. The Motor Tax building lease is due to expire in March 2029. Therefore, there are no onerous leases and rental cost savings can be realised immediately on occupancy of the proposed Civic Offices.
5. ***What is the runway to achieving the expected €700k in annual operational savings – i.e. how long does it take to realise these savings?***
   Response provided by the Executive (Finance):
   As noted in the Final Business Case, there are expected savings of €648k. The majority of which is rental of office space and meeting space rental totalling €403k p.a. As per Q4 FG Questions, there are no onerous leases therefore rental costs will be achieved immediately of occupancy in new offices. MCC will endeavour to sell The Glen offices in optimal time to realise all possible savings in a timely manner. Other costs such as IT / Wide Area Network, MTEK and Inter-site Costs Security / Frameworks and rates will also be achievable immediately.
6. ***What is the potential rental income from the Glen offices if they were to be let and what would the estimated NPV be of this over 30 years?***
   Response provided by the Executive (Finance):
   Please refer to response Q5 in SF Questions.
7. ***What are the loan repayments as a % of total revenue budget for years 10, 20 and 30 using best estimates and forecasts?***
   Response provided by the Executive (Finance):
   The estimated revenue budget below is for illustrative purposes.

	Estimate Budget	Loan Repayment	% of Total Revenue Budget
Year 10	€ 150,000,000	€ 2,009,000	**1.34%**
Year 20	€ 200,000,000	€ 2,009,000	**1.00%**
Year 30	€ 250,000,000	€ 2,009,000	**0.80%**

8. ***Of the €5.8m Revenue provision – what is the unspent/unallocated balance currently and do professional fees & costs on the project to date need to be taken off this balance?***
   Response provided by the Executive (Finance):
   Unspent/unallocated balance is €2.976m, professional fees & costs spend is included in this balance. *See summary in Q9 FG Questions below*.
9. ***How much have we spent to date on the Civic Offices project?***
   Response provided by the Executive (Finance):

New Civic Offices & Expenditure Summary		
Cumulative Provision since 2018	**€**	**5,857,607**
Expenditure:		
Professional Fees	€	2,582,893
Misc Expenditure	€	5,707
Salaries	€	292,558
Total Expenditure	**€**	**2,881,158**
Net Balance unspent	**€**	**2,976,448**

   **Professional Fees include: Consultant Fees, Design Fees and Quantity Surveyors Fees*
   ** Miscellaneous Fees include: Room Hire, Bus Hire & Advertising*
10. ***Based on current estimates and forecasts, will the €2.09m annual repayments require funding cuts to any departments, such as roads or community?***
    Response provided by the Executive (Finance):
    The current annual provision of €1.5 million plus the expected cost savings of €648k leaves a surplus of 58k after annual loan repayments. Therefore, cuts to other departments as a result of the annual loan repayment are not anticipated.

11. ***Based on current estimates and forecast will commercial rates have to be increased to cover the annual loan repayments?***
    Response provided by the Executive (Finance):
    No. As per Q10 FG Questions, the current provision and cost savings would be sufficient to service the loan repayment.
12. ***What is the expected cost of rent in year 30 if the project does not go ahead?***
    Response provided by the Executive (Finance):
    The expected cost of rent in year 30 if the project does not go ahead is €1.48m.
13. ***Can you clarify the total contingencies included in the construction price of €44m and how much other potential contingencies amount to, such as potential receipts from asset sales?***
    Response from the Executive (Capital Projects):
    A project contingency of €1,527,646 has been included within the overall construction budget prepared by the Cost Consultants. This contingency is intended to address unforeseen risks, Client changes and cost pressures that may arise during the delivery of the construction project and provides a further financial safeguard against budget overruns. To account for inflation, a Permitted Increase Threshold has been set at 5% in the Form of Tender and Schedule. This means that the contractor is required to absorb inflationary increases up to 5% and only increases above this threshold may be considered for reimbursement in accordance with the provisions of the contract. In addition, the Project Cost Consultants have made a specific allowance of €328,000 (approximately 1% of the construction cost) within the project budget to provide for any potential liability arising from the operation of PV15 should construction inflation exceed the 5% threshold during the contract period.
    Response provided by the Executive (Finance):
    There is €1,527,646 contingency built into the tender report and recommendation, as outlined above. The Executive propose and recommend that an additional 'Corporate Contingency' of €1,757,524 is put in place, to provide an overall contingency of 10% of the proposed Civic Offices building costs. The additional corporate contingency would be funded through the sale of corporate assets no longer required by the Council.
14. ***Is the current poor state and restricted space of the Glen offices a factor in employees working from home and will the new offices encourage more employees to work in the office?***
    Response provided by the Executive (Corporate Services):
    Remote working in Monaghan County Council is governed by the Council's Blended Working Policy, which sets out how and when staff may avail of remote working, and is not driven by the condition of any particular office building. Staff attendance patterns reflect how the organisation operates, with attendance influenced by a combination of operational requirements, blended working arrangements, and normal workforce factors such as annual leave, flexi-leave, business leave, off-site work and inspections. These factors apply consistently across the organisation regardless of the office location.

    This is supported by attendance analysis across different Council buildings. Data from more modern facilities, including Carrickmacross Civic Offices, shows similar typical and peak attendance levels to those observed in the Glen offices. This indicates that attendance patterns are consistent across locations and are not determined by the physical condition of a particular building.

    The purpose of the proposed Civic Offices is not to change or remove blended working, but to provide a modern, accessible and fit-for-purpose workplace that better supports collaboration, service delivery and staff wellbeing when staff are on-site. While an improved environment will enhance the overall workplace experience and support engagement, attendance levels will continue to be determined by operational needs and agreed working arrangements. Ongoing engagement with staff and unions will continue to ensure that these arrangements are clear, balanced and support both service delivery and staff wellbeing.

15. ***Will the new office cater for assumed employment growth or will we have to rent additional office space?***
Response provided by the Executive (Corporate Services):
The proposed Civic Offices have been designed to accommodate both current staffing levels and projected growth over time, without the need for additional rented office space. At opening in 2029, the building will provide 260 desks for a projected staff of approximately 275, which reflects a modest staff-to-desk ratio of approximately 1.06 to 1. This is appropriate given established attendance patterns, where 80-85% of staff are typically on-site at peak, equating to approximately 220-235 staff, meaning desk capacity will operate at around 90% utilisation with a small buffer available.

Looking ahead, projected staffing levels are approximately 290 by 2034 and 305 by 2039. The initial desk provision remains workable through the early years, with peak utilisation increasing gradually but remaining manageable. The building has been deliberately designed with internal expansion capacity to 306 desks, which is expected to be activated at around 305 staff, ensuring that peak demand continues to be accommodated without the need for external accommodation.

On this basis, the design provides a planned and scalable solution to staff growth. It ensures that the Council can accommodate future workforce requirements within the building itself, while avoiding the cost and inefficiency of over-providing space at the outset. The approach balances current operational needs with long-term flexibility and removes the need to rely on additional rented office space under the projected growth scenario.

Questions from Cllr PJ O'Hanlon Q1 to Q10 ('Cllr O'Hanlon Questions')

1. ***Monaghan County Council currently employs 380 indoor staff. The new offices accommodate 300, where will the surplus be accommodated?***
Response provided by the Executive (Corporate Services):
The figure of 380 indoor staff refers to the Council's total current indoor workforce across all services and locations. The proposed Civic Offices are designed to accommodate those staff who will relocate to a central administrative headquarters, which is approximately 260 currently. The remaining 120 staff are not part of this relocation cohort, as they are based in operational and service locations such as libraries, museum and cultural services, fire and civil defence, and the three Municipal Districts. In terms of capacity, the Civic Offices would open with 260 desks, which aligns with the current relocating staff base and supports projected growth through blended working arrangements. Peak attendance patterns show that typically 80–85% of staff are on-site at any one time, equating to approximately 220–235 staff at opening, meaning the building will operate at around 90% desk utilisation on peak days, with a buffer available. As staffing grows over time, the building has planned internal expansion capacity to 306 desks, which will be activated when required, ensuring that future demand can be accommodated within the building. On this basis, there is no surplus of staff requiring alternative accommodation, as the Civic Offices are designed specifically for the cohort of staff who will relocate, with a capacity model that reflects how the organisation operates in practice and a clear pathway to scale as required.
2. ***Have the working practices for the new building been agreed with staff?***
Response provided by the Executive (Capital Projects and Corporate Services):
Yes. Staff have been actively involved throughout the design and workplace planning process for the proposed Civic Offices. Workplace engagement has been an ongoing component of the project and has informed both the building design and the proposed workplace strategy.
Engagement with staff has taken place through a number of channels, including:
    - Leesman Workplace Survey completed by staff to inform the Workplace Strategy.
    - Civic Office Project Staff Committee, comprising 14 staff representatives.

- Staff workshops and presentation sessions open to all staff.
- Interviews with Heads of Section to understand operational and service delivery requirements.
- Civic Office Steering Committee, including 7 staff representatives from across the organisation.
- Presentations to the Senior Staff Forum.
- Benchmark visits by staff representatives to modern office buildings to review workplace layouts and working practices.

While the overall workplace strategy has been developed through this engagement process, staff engagement will continue throughout the construction phase, should the project proceed. This will ensure that staff are kept informed and have opportunities to contribute to the detailed planning and implementation of workplace practices in advance of occupation of the new building. It is worth noting that, in addition to ongoing local engagement, under Section 2.5 (Workplace of the Future) of the Public Service Agreement 2024 to 2026, it was agreed at public sector wide level that staff will cooperate with new ways of working, including blended working arrangements. This reflects the need to have more agile, digitally-enabled and collaborative workplaces,

3. ***What has been the growth of staff employment over the past 3 years (year on year)?***

Response provided by the Executive (Corporate Services):

The year-on-year staff growth over the past three years (excluding retained fire-fighters), based on figures captured in July of each year to ensure a consistent comparison, is as follows: staffing increased from 436 in 2023 to 461 in 2024, an increase of 25 staff or 5.73%; from 461 in 2024 to 470 in 2025, an increase of 9 staff or 1.95%; and remained unchanged at 470 between 2025 and 2026, representing 0.00% growth. These figures demonstrate that recent growth has been variable, with a higher increase followed by a more moderate increase and then stabilisation. It is important to place this pattern in context. The higher growth in the earlier period reflects a phase of post-COVID catch-up recruitment and the expansion of services, including areas such as Community (LA Integration Team, Local Community Safety Partnership, Community Support Workers), Town Regeneration, Communications, and expanded Housing function. For long-term planning purposes, a 1% annual growth assumption has been applied as a prudent steady-state baseline. This avoids sizing a long-term capital investment on the basis of short-term fluctuations, while still allowing for organic growth over time. It provides a balanced approach and ensures that long-term accommodation planning remains proportionate and sustainable.

4. ***Page 50, table 11, the rental saving of €14.667 million over 30 years. On the previous page there is a rental cost of €359,000 per annum that can be avoided. 30 x 359,000 = €10.77 million. This is a difference of €3.897 million. Are these figures correct?***

Response provided by the Executive (Finance):

The €359,000 rental costs are based on 2025 expenditure. In the FBC, the rental costs are anticipated to increase annually due to an estimated 1% increase in staff over the next 30 years and the impact of inflation. The increase in rental cost due to the estimated increase in staff numbers combined with inflation results in a forecast annual rental payment of €1.48m in year 30. The cumulative rental cost over 30 years is forecast at €24.2m.

5. ***On page 12, point 2 it estimates €1.56 million to €5.2 million per annum in additional local spending from staff and visitors. How was this calculated?***

Response provided by the Executive (Finance):

In line with the Infrastructure Guidelines the additional local spend estimates are indicative and assumption-based and subject to displacement, leakage and substitution effects. As such, they are not included in the core NPV calculation and they are presented to illustrate local economic significance only.

While these benefits are not included in the core cost-benefit calculation, they nonetheless represent a significant additional contribution to the local economy, reinforcing the strategic and socio-economic justification for the project. Economic impacts were estimated using a standard gross-to-net additionality framework. The assessment first estimates gross local expenditure associated with employee spending and visitor expenditure. The resulting expenditure is then considered in the context of potential leakage, displacement and substitution effects and a conservative local expenditure multiplier. This approach is consistent with recognised public sector appraisal guidance including the Infrastructure Guidelines and the Additionality Guide methodology.

Step 1 – Estimate Gross Local Spending

Assumed total staff payroll and from increased footfall by members of the public and visitors to the new Civic Offices (Estimated 200–300 daily staff presence (illustrative range)	€12,000,000	€16,000,000	Step 1
Local expenditure share	10%	25%	
Estimated local annual spend	€1,200,000	€4,000,000	

Step 2 – Apply Multiplier

Multiplier effects as the further rounds of spending generated through supply-chain purchases and employee re-spending.

Local Economic Multiplier Effects	1.3	1.3	Step 2
Estimated Annual	€1,560,000	€5,200,000	

Step 3 – Appraisal Period

Appraisal Period in years	30	30	Step 3
total local economic activity (undiscounted and indicative)	€46,800,000	€156,000,000	

Indicative local economic impacts were estimated using a gross-to-net additionality framework. Gross local expenditure was derived from the estimated staff payroll associated with the proposed Civic Offices and an assumed proportion of spending retained within the local economy. The assessment acknowledges that not all expenditure represents net additional economic activity and that impacts may be reduced by leakage, displacement and substitution effects. Consistent with recognised appraisal practice, a conservative expenditure multiplier of 1.3 was applied to illustrate the wider circulation of spending within the local economy. These estimates are presented as indicative local economic impacts only and are not included within the core economic appraisal or NPV calculation.

References

https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-public-expenditure-infrastructure-public-service-reform-and-digitalisation/collections/infrastructure-guidelines/
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-green-book-appraisal-and-evaluation-in-central-government/the-green-book-2026
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/378177/additionality_guide_2014_full.pdf

6. ***Page 45 section 6, everything is really based on estimates and assumptions, we have seen many public expenditure projects run over budget (e.g. BioConnect and Peace Campus). How accurate are these estimates?***

Response provided by the Executive (Capital Projects):
Construction Cost Allowances
The tendered construction cost comprises
Office Building: €27,622,198
External Works: €5,225,501
Totalling the tendered construction value of €32,847,700.

Current construction inflation is estimated at approximately 2–3% per annum. The contractor's tender includes an allowance that absorbs the majority of anticipated inflation over the construction period. In addition, the project budget includes a separate allowance for inflation under the Price Variation Clause, bringing the total inflation provision to approximately 6% over the planned two-year construction programme. A Contingency Allowance of €1,527,646 (approximately 5% of the contract value) has been included to cover any unforeseen employer requirements, necessary project changes or other unexpected costs that may arise during construction. This level of contingency is in line with normal industry practice for projects of this scale and complexity and was recommended by the project's Cost Consultants. In addition to the €1,527,646 contingency built into the tender report and recommendation, the Executive propose and recommend that an additional 'Corporate Contingency' of €1,757,524 is put in place, to provide an overall contingency of 10% of the proposed Civic Offices building costs. The additional Corporate Contingency would be funded through the sale of corporate assets no longer required by the Council. A further Direct Costs Allowance of €500,000 has been included to cover project-related costs not contained within the construction contract, including Monaghan County Council project management and administrative costs.These allowances represent prudent financial management and are intended to minimise the risk of future budget overruns. The project is being delivered using the PW-CF2 Public Works Contract (Building Works Designed by the Contractor), which transfers a significant proportion of design and quantity-related risks to the contractor and therefore reduces the Council's exposure to cost uncertainty during construction.

7. ***Car Parking - How many car parking spaces are provided for parking? Have we rented out spaces from other sources? Who are the providers? How many spaces are there? What is the annual cost?***

Response provided by the Executive (Capital Projects):
A total of 239 parking spaces would be available to serve the proposed Civic Offices. This provision comprises:

- 114 new on-site parking spaces to be constructed as part of the proposed Civic Offices project; and
- 125 additional parking spaces secured through an agreement with Monaghan Harps GAA Club at an annual rental cost of €8,000.

This approach was selected following an assessment of alternative parking options. The principal alternative was the construction of a multi-storey car park. However, this option would have involved a significantly higher capital cost and was not considered to represent good value for money.
The adopted parking strategy will provide 239 parking spaces at an estimated cost of €1.615 million (€6,757 per space), compared to an estimated €4.577 million (€26,924 per space) for a 170-space multi-storey car park. Accordingly, the agreed parking strategy delivers a greater number of spaces at a substantially lower overall cost and represents the most cost-effective solution for the project.

Multi Storey Carpark Option			Car Park Strategy provided	
€4,577,040	Multi-storey car park		€1,327,150	Civic Office On Grade Car Park Coat
170	Car Parking Spaces		114	Civic Office Spaces
€26,924	cost per space		€287,769	Monaghan Harps Car Park Cost
			125	Monaghan Harps Car Park Spaces
			€1,614,919	**Cost of Car Parking Strategy**
			239	**Number of Car Parking Spaces**
			€6,757	cost per space
*figures exclude VAT				

8. ***I was happy to hear at the last Co. Co. meeting that assets that are not being used will be sold. Is it possible that the monies from these sales would be given back directly to the ratepayers who are funding this new project?***

   Response provided by the Executive (Finance):

   The proceeds from the sale of assets would be used either to fund additional corporate contingence contingency for the proposed Civic Offices project, referred to earlier, and if the additional contingency is not required, it would be used to fund capital projects or unfunded capital balances.

9. ***In relation to the BioConnect building project, would it be possible to defer the commencement of the building of the new offices to see how the BioConnect building performs? The last thing we need is another vacant building.***

   Response provided by the Executive:

   It is recommended that the commencement of the construction of the proposed Civic Offices would proceed should the Members give their approval for the project to proceed to the construction phase. Separately, the Council is working proactively with public and private sector partners to ensure the completion, occupation and operational readiness of the BioConnect facility.

10. ***Is Monaghan Co.Co. satisfied that this new building will cater for all its needs for the next thirty years?***

    Response provided by the Executive (Corporate Services):

    Yes. Monaghan County Council is satisfied that the proposed Civic Offices are designed to meet the organisation's long-term operational needs, incorporating modern standards, flexible workspace design, and capacity to support hybrid working and future service demands. The building has been future-proofed to allow for growth and adaptation over time; however, as with any long-term projection, ongoing monitoring of workforce trends and service requirements will be necessary to ensure continued alignment over the full 30-year period.

Value Engineering Table relates to SF Question 7				
VE Item	**Title**	**Short Description**	**IDT Initial evaluation from submission**	**Potential savings**
VE 1	Integrated Lighting within Acoustic Ceiling Panels	Factory-install lighting units within acoustic ceiling panels to reduce site labour, coordination and installation time.	This VE proposal has potential - The details of this VE would have to be considered further with the preferred bidder.	€ 50,000
VE 2	Topsoil Reuse with Enabling Works Contractor	Reuse excavated topsoil within adjacent works (Roosky Access Road embankments) instead of exporting material.	This VE proposal has potential - The details of this VE would have to be considered further with the preferred bidder.	€ 64,250
VE 3	Article 27 Reuse of Excavated Material	Investigate reuse of suitable excavated clay as a by-product to reduce disposal costs.	The details of this VE would have to be considered further with the preferred bidder. Implementation will be subject to identification of a suitable receiving site, testing, classification and agreement to ensure full statutory compliance.	€ 450,000
VE 4	Façade Optimisation	Rationalise façade fins, finishes and curtain walling systems while maintaining performance.	The details of this VE would have to be considered carefully with the preferred bidder. There would need to be extensive redesign modelling and review by MCC Technical Team to ensure this is a viable VE without compromising the performance and function of the building.	€ 540,630
VE 5	Relocation of External Lift	Move external lift closer to the building to simplify construction and improve circulation.	The details of this VE would have to be considered carefully with the preferred bidder, This VE would require alteration to the Part 8 approval which would be a major consideration before deciding on its merits.	€ 50,000
VE 6	SuDS Rain Gardens and Planted Attenuation	Use rain gardens and planted attenuation in place of some traditional drainage infrastructure.	The details of this VE would have to be considered further with the preferred bidder, detailed proposals would be required.	€ 50,000
VE 7	Parent Company Guarantee in Lieu of Performance Bond	Replace performance bond with parent company guarantee.	This **VE will not be considered** in a Public Works Contract	€ 200,000
VE 8	Alternative Landscape Species	Use alternative planting species while maintaining landscape intent.	The details of this VE would have to be considered further with the preferred bidder to insure it does not compromise the design intent.	€ 30,000
VE 9	Rationalised Canopy Soffit Treatments	Standardise canopy soffit systems and materials to improve buildability.	The details of this VE would have to be considered further with the preferred bidder, detailed proposals would be required.	€ 60,000
VE 10	Alternative Mech and Elec Plant Strategy	Review the Mechanical & Electrical Plant detailed design to ascertain potential savings from redesign.	The details of this VE would have to be considered carefully with the preferred bidder. There would need to be extensive redesign modelling and review by MCC Technical Team to ensure this is a viable VE without compromising the performance and function of the building.	€ 300,000

On the proposal of Cllr. A. Campbell, seconded by Cllr. C. Carthy, it was agreed that a Civic Reception be afforded to the Monaghan Camogie Girls Team in recognition of their achievement in winning the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Junior Camogie Championship. It was further agreed that the Monaghan Special Olympics Club would be formally recognised in celebration of the achievements of its athletes at the recent National Games.

Signed:_____________________
Cathaoirleach

Signed: _________________________
Meetings
Administrator

Date:	_____________________