
**Minutes of Meeting of Longford County Council
held in the Council Chamber and via Microsoft Teams on
Wednesday, 11 March 2026 at 4pm**

PRESIDING: Councillor Garry Murtagh

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Niall Gannon, Peggy Nolan, Gerry Hagan, Pdraig McNamara, Colin Dalton, Uruemu Adejinmi, Mick Cahill, Pat O'Toole, David Cassidy, Turlough McGovern, Mark Casey, Kevin Hussey, Martin Monaghan, Sean Mimnagh

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. Paddy Mahon, Chief Executive
Mr. John Brannigan, Director of Services
Ms. Barbara Heslin, Director of Services
Ms. Samantha Healy, Director of Service
Ms. Martina Needham, County Librarian
Ms. Fema Flanagan, Financial Management Accountant
Mr. Richard Smith, Senior Executive Officer
Ms. Louise Connaughton, Clerical Officer
Ms. Louise Kiernan, Senior Planner

APOLOGIES: Councillor Paul Ross
Councillor Martin Skelly
Councillor Seamus Butler
Mr. John McKeon, Director of Finance

MEETINGS

ADMINISTRATOR: Ms. Lorraine McKee

1. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

On the proposal of Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi, seconded by Councillor Pat O'Toole the minutes of the monthly meeting of Longford County Council held on 11 February 2026, as circulated, were confirmed, and adopted.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

None

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

None

4. MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Elected Members noted the management report.

On the proposal of Councillor Mark Casey seconded by Councillor Turlough McGovern, it was agreed to write to Minister for Climate, Energy and the Environment and Minister for Transport, Darragh O'Brien, requesting the Government to alleviate carbon tax and reduce taxes on petrol, diesel and home heating oil.

5. TO NOTE CE AND DELEGATION ORDERS

Noted

6. TO NOTE ADOPTED MINUTES OF CORPORATE POLICY GROUP MEETING HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2026

Noted

7. TO NOTE ADOPTED MINUTES OF CORPORATE POLICY GROUP MEETING HELD ON 9 APRIL 2025

Noted

8. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- (i) **To note the Minutes of the Social Development Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 20 October 2025**

Noted

- (ii) **Longford County Council Scheme of Priority for Affordable Dwelling Purchase Arrangements, Cúirt an Easpaig, Ballinalee Road, Co. Longford**

On the proposal of Councillor Pat O'Toole seconded by Councillor Pdraig McNamara the amending of the wording in the legislation in Longford County Council Scheme of Priority for Affordable Dwelling Purchase Arrangements, Cúirt an Easpaig, Ballinalee Road, Longford, was approved.

9. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- (i) **Cathaoirleach Awards 2026**

The Cathaoirleach Awards will take place on Wednesday, 10 June 2026.

- (ii) **Annual Service Delivery Plan 2026**

On the proposal of Councillor Mick Cahill seconded by Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi the Annual Service Delivery Plan 2026 was approved.

(iii) To note the Minutes of the Economic, Enterprise & Rural Development Strategic Policy Committee meeting held on 22 October 2025

Noted

(iv) Revised Terms of Reference for the County Tourism Committee

On the proposal of Councillor Mark Casey seconded by Councillor Kevin Hussey, the revised Terms of Reference for the County Tourism Committee was approved.

(v) Updated Memorandum of Understanding between Longford County Council and Longford County Tourism CLG.

On the proposal of Councillor Pat O'Toole seconded by Councillor Padraig McNamara, the updated Memorandum of Understanding between Longford County Council and Longford County Tourism CLG was approved.

(vi) Small Rate Payer Support Scheme

On the proposal of Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi seconded by Councillor Peggy Nolan, the Small Rate Payer Support Scheme was approved.

(vii) Business Incentive Scheme

On the proposal of Uruemu Adejinmi seconded by Councillor Padraig McNamara, the Business Incentive Scheme was approved.

(viii) Shop Front Enhancement Scheme

On the proposal of Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi seconded by Councillor Turlough McGovern, the Shop Front Enhancement Scheme was approved.

(ix) Dreamspace Update

County Librarian, Martina Needham, gave a presentation to the Elected Members updating them on Dreamspace and answered questions raised by the Members.

The presentation included the following:

- Award winning Longford Microsoft Dreamspace Showcase 2026
- School participation from 2023-2026
- Funding
- Other STEAM projects and initiatives

The Members unanimously thanked Martina Needham, Danny Lynch, Christine Collins and all the team in IT for the work carried out on this event throughout the year and they are looking forward to the event this year.

Dreamspace 2026 is taking place on Tuesday, 24 March 2026 in Edgeworthstown.

10. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

(i) To Note Planning Applications Received

Noted.

(ii) To note the Minutes of the Physical Development Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 21 October 2025

Noted

(iii) NPF Implementation Housing Growth Requirements – Correspondence from Ministers

Director of Services Barbara Heslin spoke to the Members regarding correspondence received from Minister James Browne and Minister John Cummins under the Planning and Development Act (2000) (as amended) in July 2025. All local authorities were requested to commence the process of revising and varying development plans as quickly as possible, to ensure that the new housing growth requirements are incorporated.

In December 2025, the Council approved the Chief Executive report on the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements. This report concluded that no variation to the County Development Plan was required as there was adequate zoned lands to meet the housing targets set by the Department. These targets had not changed from the current plan. The Elected Members agreed that no variation to the County Development Plan was required and this was communicated to the OPR and Department.

However, following the most recent correspondence, Longford County Council is now proposing to vary the County Development Plan by activating land that is currently zoned for strategic residential reserve. The Forward Planning team have worked in the proposed changes to the text with a view to amending the strategic residential reserve objective. Activating these lands will be subject to the principles of infrastructure led compact growth as well as environmental considerations that underpin the County Development Plan.

The proposed amendments will go to Public Consultation on the Friday, 20 March for 4 weeks. Following public consultation, submissions will be considered, and amendments made accordingly. The variation will go to the CPG for consideration and recommendation before consideration and approval at a full Council meeting. A report will also be prepared and published on the Council's website.

(iv) Notice of Motions

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Turlough McGovern seconded by Councillor Mark Casey

Following on from the recent Road Safety Authority (RSA) Ireland review regarding the regulation of tractor (Category W) driving, considering the

introduction of a mandatory, formal driving test and training programme for learner permit holders.

I call on Longford County Council to write to the Minister seeking a training facility to be located in a central location like Granard Mart in County Longford. To support young people with proper training and instruction to improve road safety, as the current rules allow 16-year-olds to operate large tractors with only a learner permit. This is absolutely necessary to continue supporting the farming industry as a whole.

Response:

Action 146 in Ireland's Government Road Safety 2021-2030 states that the Road Safety Authority (RSA) consider the introduction of a mandatory training programme and a driving test for new category W only learner permit applicants.

Longford County Council has reached out to the RSA. The RSA has confirmed that it is currently evaluating the curriculum and education provided to learner drivers. While there is presently no requirement for a Category W test applicant to complete Essential Driver Training (EDT), the RSA has indicated that this may be considered in the future.

The RSA facilitate Tractor training at all test centres and conducts tractor tests at alternative locations outside the test centres at the customer's request. The RSA does not provide driver training directly, it trains and oversees RSA approved driving instructors who deliver this training nationwide.

Longford County Council will write to the Minister for Transport, Darragh O'Brien, Minister of State with responsibility for Road Safety, Séan Canney, and Minister of State with responsibility for Rural Transport, Jerry Buttimer.

The Council will request that consideration be given to locating a tractor training facility in Granard, Co. Longford if the RSA introduces a mandatory training programme as part of Phase 2 Action Plan of the Government's Road Safety Strategy which runs from 2025 to 2027.

Information regarding steps to becoming a work vehicle of tractor driver is available on the [RSA website](#).

A number of private operators and farming organisations provide tractor training courses.

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Turlough McGovern seconded by Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi

I call on Longford County Council to make a presentation on their Environmental Enforcement Performance to-date. With farmers livelihoods and health under ever increasing pressure from external forces such as Mercosur and internal issues such as Derogation/Nitrates, consideration, compassion and support must be provided to farmers at this time.

Response:

Longford County Council (LCC) recognises the significant pressures currently facing the farming community and remains committed to understanding its environmental responsibilities in a fair, courteous, and professional manner, in line with the Council's Customer Services Charter.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed the National Agricultural Inspection Programme (NAIP) to help maintain and improve natural water quality in Ireland by ensuring a consistent approach to the enforcement of the Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters (including S.I 588 of 2025).

It is important to note that GAP inspections by local authorities form a core element of the regulatory enforcement framework required to demonstrate compliance with Ireland's obligations under the EU Nitrates Directive, and to support the retention of the nitrates derogation.

The Water Action Plan 2024 (River Basin Management Plan) sets a national target of 4,500 inspections per annum, which is delivered through NAIP on a risk-based basis.

For 2025, the EPA instructed Longford County Council to undertake initial (first time) GAP inspections on a minimum of 77 farms in its functional area between 1 January 2025 and 31 December 2025. Longford County Council conducted 78.

For 2026, the EPA has instructed Longford County Council to:

- Undertake initial (first time) GAP inspections on a minimum of 77 farms in its functional area between 1 January 2026 and 31 December 2026.
- Compile inspection reports and record findings for all initial and follow-up GAP inspections, and report results to the EPA.
- Retain a copy of all farm inspection reports on file and report all results to the EPA in the format specified.
- Follow up on issues or non-compliance identified during inspections.
- Cross report where appropriate to the Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine.

When undertaking inspections on farms, the EPA expects Longford County Council to:

- Fully enforce the requirements of the GAP Regulations.
- Implement dissuasive sanctions and/or prosecutions as may be appropriate.
- Use the EPA approved 'Farm Inspection Form' provided by the EPA or an electronic equivalent.
- The inspection shall be undertaken having full regard to the following priorities:
 - National Enforcement Priorities (NEPs) for Agriculture
 - NAIP Guidance and Training Handbook

- Farm and Landscape measures for Agriculture (FLAG) MAP and associated waterbodies list
- Pollution Impact Potential (PIP-N & PIP-P) Maps

All NAIP inspection are notified in writing, a minimum of 48 hours' notice, and flexibility applied where circumstances allow. Where remedial works are required, reasonableness and regard to individual circumstances are applied in all cases.

Local Irish Farming Association (IFA) representatives were consulted in relation to the inspection process and notification arrangements.

Inspections are carried out on a risk-based assessment only, focusing on areas where agriculture has been deemed by the EPA as the 'significant pressure', and in areas affecting 'high status water bodies'.

Longford County Council's inspection programme is also supported by a range of complementary initiatives, including sheep worrying campaigns, the development and promotion of GAP guidance material, engaging with local Teagasc representatives for improved cooperation, attendance at the Longford Agricultural Show, and the delivery of Knowledge Transfer (KT) Talks.

These KT Talks are established presentations by the Environment Section of Longford County Council on farming legislation, good practice, water quality, and on the inspection process. To date, over 100 local farmers have attended sessions in Dromard, Granard, Bunlahy, Ardagh and Kilcogy.

The Environment Section continue to be available to meet with farming groups.

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Mick Cahill seconded by Councillor Pat O'Toole

I call on Longford County Council to provide an update on the current status of progress on the N4 Mullingar to Roosky project covering, consultant's, community, landowner engagement and environmental constraints, and also how the recent allocation of six million euro supports the project.

Response:

The N4 Mullingar to Longford (Roosky) Scheme is currently progressing well through Phase 3 (Design and Environmental Evaluation) of the TII Project Management Guidelines.

The Scheme has recently received an allocation for 2026 of €6m. This €6m funding will primarily be utilised to continue to fund consultant's fees, ground investigation works, topographical works and environmental surveys along the extent of the N4 corridor.

Public Liaison Officers that are appointed specifically to the scheme are continuing to liaise with the respective landowners in relation to the ongoing investigation and survey works. Environmental surveys are ongoing to identify any environmental constraints on the site to ensure mitigation measures are in place prior to completion of the Phase 3 process.

As the Scheme progresses through Phase 3 and the design becomes fixed, further community engagement shall take place to inform the general public of the latest design iteration for the Scheme. The general public is welcome to contact the Project Team if they have any specific queries in relation to the Scheme. Contact details for the Project Team can be found on the [project website](#).

Cathaoirleach Garry Murtagh asked that the TII be invited to provide a progress report on the project at a future Council Meeting. This was agreed by the Members.

11. FINANCE, INNOVATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(i) To note the Minutes of the Governance Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 21 October 2025

Noted

(ii) Members County Wide Fund 2025-2029

Financial Management Accountant, Fema Flanagan provided an update to the Members on the Members County Wide Fund 2025-2029 and answered questions raised by the Members.

Applications are open from 1 March 2026 and will close on 31 March 2026. The application forms are available on the Elected Members Extranet, and each application is required to be sponsored by an Elected Member. Applications will be reviewed at the April Corporate Policy Group meeting.

(iii) Capital Budget 2026-2028

Financial Management Accountant, Fema Flanagan made a detailed presentation to the Members on the Capital Budget 2026-2028 and answered questions raised by the Members.

The presentation included the following:

- 3 Year Investment Programme 2026-2028
- Budgeted Capital Expenditure 2026-2028
- Overall Expenditure Acceleration
- Sources of Funding

On the proposal of Councillor Mick Cahill seconded by Councillor Peggy Nolan, the Capital Budget 2026-2028 was approved.

12. GENERAL

Notice of Motions

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor David Cassidy and seconded by Councillor Kevin Hussey

I call upon Longford County Council to write to the Minister for Children, Disability & Equality, Norma Foley TD and Minister of State Emer Higgins TD to strongly advocate for an emergency payment to be made to disabled people to alleviate the shortfall from cuts to disability funding in Budget 2026, as a mechanism to bridge the gap until an annual Cost of Disability payment (which the government has committed to implement) in 2027 is put in place to address the extra expenses faced by disabled people.

Response:

It was agreed that Longford County Council would write to the Minister for Children, Disability & Equality, Norma Foley TD and Minister of State Emer Higgins TD and the Notice of Motion will be circulated to all Local Authorities.

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Garry Murtagh seconded by Councillor Gerry Hagan

I call on Longford County Council to write to the Minister of State with responsibility for the Department of Health with special responsibility for older people Kieran O'Donnell in relation to insufficient support through the HSE for Home Help. People are stressed out and in dire straits with the lack of support on arriving home from hospital. People are being discharged from hospital with the necessary paperwork completed for Health Care Package to arrive home to find inadequate supports available.

Local Health nurses and HSE staff are at breaking point. The reality is the private agencies in rural Ireland that are meant to support HSE/Home Help staff are not available. Private agencies in rural Ireland are not fit for purpose, minimum wage and lack of sufficient subsidies to cover the ever-rising costs of fuel is leaving it impossible for these agencies to retain staff. The HSE must do more in terms of active recruitment to increase Home Help staff, a core support to secure the future of home care for the elderly.

Furthermore, serious consideration must be given to a fully funded care and repair scheme to support elderly people that have insufficient supports and resources, to have the simplest tasks completed in the home like installing grab rails, changing a light bulb, mowing the lawn, to you and me simple everyday tasks yet difficult tasks for the more vulnerable in our society. We in Longford County Council would fully support a Care & Repair pilot scheme rolled out in Longford.

Response:

Longford County Council agreed to write to the Minister of State with responsibility for the Department of Health with special responsibility for older people Kieran O'Donnell in this regard.

13. CORRESPONDENCE

- (I) Correspondence from Sligo County Council**
Noted
- (II) Correspondence from Clare County Council**
Noted
- (III) Motion passed at meeting of Wicklow County Council**
Noted
- (IV) Motion from Wexford County Council**
Noted
- (V) Correspondence from Galway County Council**
Noted
- (VI) Correspondence from Sorca Clarke TD**
Noted
- (VII) Motion from Wexford County Council**
Noted
- (VIII) Correspondence from Minister Robert Troy**
Noted
- (IX) NPF Implementation Housing Growth Requirements – Correspondence from Ministers**
Noted
- (X) Correspondence from HSE**
Noted
- (XI) Correspondence from LWETB**
Noted
- (XII) Correspondence from Leitrim County Council**
Noted

14. TRAINING FOR APPROVAL

On the proposal of Councillor Mick Cahill seconded by Councillor Gerry Hagan, the training circulated was approved.

15. VOTES OF SYMPATHY

The Elected Members unanimously paid tribute to Joan McKeon, mother of Director of Finance John McKeon, on her recent passing. The Elected Members extended their condolences to the family and friends of the deceased RIP.

16. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Longford County Council will take place on Wednesday, 8 April 2026 at 4pm in the Council Chamber.

Confirmed and adopted at Meeting of Longford County Council held on 8 April 2026.