

MINUTES OF MONTHLY Meeting OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNCIL Chamber, Áras an Chontae, Roscommon
MONDAY, 15TH DECEMBER, 2025 AT 2.15 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Liam Callaghan **PRESIDED**

MEMBERS: Cllr L. Brennan, Cllr V. Byrne, Cllr R. Conboy, Cllr D. Connolly, Cllr T. Crosby, Cllr L. Cull, Cllr N. Dineen, Cllr V. Duffy, Cllr L. Fallon, Cllr P. Fitzmaurice, Cllr M. Frain, Cllr M.Holland, Cllr E. Kelly, Cllr J. Keogh, Cllr S. Moylan, Cllr M. McDermott and Cllr T. Ward.

OFFICIALS: Shane Tiernan, Chief Executive
Caitlín Conneely, Director of Services
Chris Flynn, Director of Services
Mark Keaveney, Director of Services
Sean Mullarkey, Director of Finance
Karen Hanley, Meetings Administrator
Claudette Collins, Staff Officer

Apologies: .

164.25 DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST (SECTION 177 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 AS AMENDED)

There were no Disclosures of Conflict of Interest declared by Members.

165.25 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Kelly
SECONDED by Cllr. Brennan
It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Budget Meeting of 19.11.2025

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Frain
SECONDED by Cllr. Crosby
It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting of 24.11.2025

166.25 MATTERS ARISING

Cllr. Brennan proposed that Ballymore Properties be invited to attend a meeting in Roscommon to outline their proposed development in Athlone, as well as the possible positive impact this will have for County Roscommon. Members showed their support for this proposal, expressing that the development is a great opportunity for the region and welcomed the opportunity to meet and discuss the development with Ballymore Properties.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Brennan
SECONDED by Cllr. Holland
It was **AGREED** to write to Ballymore Properties inviting them to a meeting of Roscommon County Council

to outline the masterplan for Athlone as a new sustainable city.

Cllr. Crosby expressed his disappointment at the response received from Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) in relation to Scramogue Crossroads. He stated that there was full support from Members and agreement that this was an urgent matter. He also acknowledged that the CPG had agreed a delegation will go to meet representatives from TII.

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Callaghan, in response, assured Cllr. Crosby that it was agreed at the CPG to write to TII requesting an in-person meeting.

Cllr. Dineen sought clarification and follow up as to whether a response was furnished from the ESB following Storm Éoywn. He requested a progress update regarding the arrangements for the ESB and Coillte presenting to the Members.

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Callaghan informed Cllr. Dineen that any updates were circulated in the correspondence pack.

Cllr. Ward reiterated a concern previously raised regarding the N61 being no longer fit for purpose citing the excessive number of junctions within a built-up area. He further acknowledged that any improvement works will require considerable time and funding. Cllr. Ward proposed writing to TII to get the N61 on the agenda for upgrade works. He also referred to a proposal previously discussed for new road infrastructure in the form of a link road from Ganley's Hardware to Monksland. He remarked that this would greatly improve traffic conditions.

In response, the Director of Services, Mr. Mark Keaveney, confirmed that funding had been sought from the Department to commence the Planning and Design phase for the proposed link road, with an outcome expected in the New Year. He also advised that a submission had been made to TII and the Department in relation to the N61, and that work was ongoing on a further submission to upgrade the N61 to National Primary Road status.

167.25 MANAGEMENT REPORT

- Management Report for November 2025 noted.

168.25 DISPOSAL OF LANDS

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

169.25 CORRESPONDENCE

Noted as circulated in advance of the meeting.

170.25 ADOPTION OF PERIODIC SPEED LIMITS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 9(5) OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC ACT 2004

Director of Services, Mark Keaveney, presented the periodic speed limits indicating that a report had been circulated to the Members. He outlined that funding had been received from TII in 2025 to deliver Road

Safety Improvement Schemes. He outlined the periodic speed limits are proposed in two locations at schools – Ballyleague NS, Ballyleague and St. Marys NS, Strokestown. This is a variation of the current bye laws which will see an introduction of a 30km speed limit at school drop off times.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne

SECONDED by Cllr. Dineen

It was **AGREED** to adopt Periodic Special Speed Limit Bye-Laws.

171.25 PRESENTATION ON RATES ON VACANT PROPERTIES

Cllr. John Keogh, Chairperson of the Economic Development & Enterprise Support SPC, introduced the scheme. He stated the purpose of the scheme was to tackle dereliction and to encourage new businesses to occupy vacant premises. The scheme is expected to generate extra income which will be ring fenced for specific projects. Vacant properties must meet certain criteria to avail of a discounted rate – the premises must be available for letting, up for sale or undergoing renovation/remedial works. Cllr. Keogh showed his support for the scheme and proposed its adoption.

Director of Finance, Sean Mullarkey, delivered a presentation outlining the Rates on Vacant Properties Scheme outlining some key points:

- The objectives of the scheme are to tackle dereliction, encourage commercial activity, and generate additional revenue.
- The scheme targets properties that are unlikely to return to retail units.
- Although there is limited information available on the Vacant Above the Shop Grant of €140,000 per unit, it is expected that, alongside the introduction of rates on vacant properties, the scheme will encourage property owners to address vacant premises.
- He acknowledged that it would cost the Council to implement these new proposed rates, as they have historically been written off.
- He proposed the introduction of the scheme in 2027, using 2026 as a year to publish the scheme, share information on the changes which will be introduced and outline the options for property owners.
- Below is the proposed rate on vacant property for 2027

No. of Properties	Value	% charge of rates for Vacant Property in 2027
2	20 – 50K	50%
68	3 – 20K	40%
483	0 – 3K	30%

- Efforts from owners to sell or let the premises, or undergoing renovation will be taken into consideration for a rate wavier.

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Callaghan queried if a business that is closed but the owner or family is living in the house are liable under this scheme and highlighted the need to be sensitive in certain cases, in particular family businesses, where the owner may still be residing on the premises. He also queried whether it was a significant task to delist a property.

In response, Director of Finance Sean Mullarkey confirmed that where rates are payable on the premises, such properties would be liable for the vacancy charge. He emphasised that this scheme is an incentive to

regenerate vacant premises and that it is not a significant task to delist a property.

Chief Executive, Shane Tiernan, remarked that it is possible for owners to have a property delisted through the process and it be reflected as a rejuvenated residential premises. It could also encourage the owners to rent out the retail aspect and continue to reside in the property. The scheme is to encourage action on the retail part which will be charged rates under the current system.

Members made the following observations and comments on the scheme:

- The scheme was welcomed, as dereliction can be seen in all towns and villages. Online shopping has had a major impact and left many retail units no longer viable.
- It was queried whether it would be more appropriate to defer the scheme's implementation until 2028. Outlining that this would give further opportunity to circulate information and for property owners to secure grant aid.
- Members expressed concerns particularly where the properties consist of both a commercial and residential aspect.
- It was queried if a property becomes residential after being delisted and if the owner is required to apply for a change of use. Clarification from Planning was requested and suggested that these mixed units are exempt from the scheme for the moment.
- Suggestion from the SPC that the Local Enterprise Office would include supports and guidance for vacant property owners and expressions of hope that this will be included in the information circulated on the scheme in 2026 was discussed.
- It was suggested that the revenue generated to be ringfenced for specific projects to tackle dereliction and generate commercial activity in towns.
- Acknowledgement that towns such as Elphin have benefited from the regeneration of derelict buildings and that the scheme could replicate this success countywide.
- Recognition of the importance of commercial activity to the county's economy.
- Broad support for the scheme as a positive measure to address dereliction.
- Concern was expressed for smaller towns and villages where demand for commercial units may be limited, noting that some premises may have heritage significance and that planning implications should be considered sensitively. A flexible approach was requested in such cases.

Director of Finance, Sean Mullarkey confirmed the proposed scheme will be introduced in 2027 as 2026 provides an opportunity to ascertain Planning requirements, fire standards, the Vacant Above the Shop Grant, identify vacant property owners, and provide information on the scheme and the options available.

Cllr. Holland expressed a conflict of interest and excused himself from the meeting while this item on the agenda is being discussed.

Cllr. Keogh suggested an amendment to the scheme, if required to ensure its approval, whereby owner-occupiers living in the premises would be exempt. He stated that this would affect very few cases and would still address the issue of dereliction.

Cllr. Fitzmaurice proposed a small amendment to the above stating that the owner-occupier living on as well as above the premises would be exempt.

Chief Executive, Shane Tiernan noted that in principle most Members were in agreement with the scheme. In relation to Cllr. Keogh's proposal on an exemption for owner-occupier he believes the Council would be

putting undue burden on an individual to prove they reside on the premises. He suggested adopting the scheme in principle. He also noted that planning will have to be looked at on a case-by-case basis. His main concern was to ensure the scheme was not rendered ineffective.

Cllr. Keogh withdrew his proposal on an exemption, and he agreed to proceed with the scheme but emphasised that discretion is to be applied in cases of owner-occupier.

Cllr. Fitzmaurice requested a commitment from Planning that property owners would not have to apply for a change of use in order to ensure no undue demands are placed on the owners.

Chief Executive, Shane Tiernan stated that many Members had requested action on tackling dereliction, which is where the scheme originated from. He outlined that the aim is to encourage business units, which are rateable and currently vacant, to consider a new business unit or convert into a private residence. He explained that individual cases can be looked at to ensure the scheme is not creating any undue burden on owners. He stressed that for the scheme to be effective, this is the approach that should be taken. He acknowledged the Members comments and concerns stating that the next 12 months will be available to finalise the details of the scheme.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Keogh
SECONDED by Cllr. Crosby

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Rates on Vacant Properties Scheme with discretion to be applied by the Director of Finance for owner-occupiers who can apply and demonstrate they live on the premises.

172.25 ROSCOMMON SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

Director of Services, Mark Keaveney expressed that Roscommon Sport Partnership were seeking a board nomination to ensure full representation. He explained that Members will be a Director of the company as it is a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Connolly
SECONDED by Cllr. Crosby

It was **AGREED** to approve nomination of Cllr. Ruth Conboy to the board of Directors for Roscommon Sports Partnership.

173.25 SCHEME OF PRIORITY FOR AFFORDABLE DWELLING PURCHASE ARRANGEMENTS

Cllr. Connolly, Chairperson of the Housing, Integration, Community and Culture SPC introduced the Draft Scheme of Priority for Affordable Dwelling Purchase Arrangements. Members were advised that the adoption of a Scheme of Priority is a reserved function of the Local Authority and is subject to Ministerial review prior to final approval.

The following key points from the Draft Scheme of Priority were presented:

Regulation 5 of S.I. No. 21/2023 – Affordable Housing (No. 2) Regulations 2023) provides that in relation to 70% of the homes advertised by a housing authority, homes must be prioritised based on suitability first:

1. Households of at least 3 persons to be given priority for four-bedroom homes and households of at

- least 2 persons to be given priority for three-bedroom homes, and then.
2. First come, first served.

For the remaining 30% of homes, the housing authority must firstly prioritise based on household size as set out above. After that, the Local Authority can apply additional criteria as it sees fit.

In relation to the 30% of dwellings, where the number of applicants exceeds the number of affordable dwellings for sale, the housing authority will prioritise households in the following manner:

1. Priority given to households whose accommodation needs would be adequately catered for by the type of dwelling in question as per section 5.1 of the scheme.
2. Priority to be given to eligible households whose current address as given in the application form is within the Municipal District of the relevant affordable scheme for a minimum period of 2 years on the date of application.
3. Priority to be given to the eligible applicants in the date and time order that their applications were received.

Director of Services, Chris Flynn, explained that The Affordable Housing Scheme is a first for Roscommon with 6 units expected in Q1 2026. A survey was carried out to establish demand and the scheme of priority needs to be established initially.

Members made the following observations on the scheme:

- Welcomed the scheme, remarking the high construction costs and house prices currently.
- It was proposed that 10% of Part V developments would be allocated as Affordable Housing and 10% as Social Housing, and if the Affordable Houses were not allocated, the units could return to Social Housing.
- Affordable Housing is an alternative to get on the property ladder and limits over saturation of Social Housing.
- Members expressed the view that the scheme may assist in reducing the Social Housing waiting list.
- Members stated that they would like to see Affordable Housing delivered across the county to ensure that no towns are overlooked.

In response, Director of Services, Chris Flynn stated that currently the Department fund the 20% allocation of social housing, and they may not fund 10% allocation of affordable. He also reminded Members of the First Choice Homes Scheme which is also available for prospective homeowners.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Connolly

SECONDED by Cllr. Holland

It was **AGREED** to approve The Scheme of Priority for Affordable Dwelling Purchase Arrangements

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fitzmaurice

SECONDED by Cllr. Kelly

It was **AGREED** to write to the Department and the Minister for Housing proposing that 10% of all Part V Schemes are allocated and funded for affordable housing, and 10% allocated and funded for social housing. Where affordable housing units are not taken up within a specified timeframe, these units shall revert to social housing.

174.25 NOTICE OF MOTION

174.25a CLLR. FRAIN - M28:25 - NATIONAL MOBILISING AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

Notice of Motion from Cllr. Frain

Notice of motion calling on Roscommon County Council as Fire Authority, to write to the Minister for Housing and Local Government and the National Directorate of Fire and Emergency Management, and enquire as to what measures have been taken to ensure that the "National Mobilizing and Communication System" will have its own independent power supply to deliver Fire Services Emergency Communications (TETRA) in the event of further storms? During Storm Éowyn, the system relied on third party sites without any back up power supply, resulting in the failure of this critical infrastructure.

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply: This Motion requires a Resolution by the Council.

Cllr. Frain outlined how the communication system for the Emergency Services went down during Storm Éowyn, and expressed his disappointment that the system relies on third party sites without any back up power supply. He also noted how Local Authorities pay upwards of €300k per annum for this service which does not appear to have an effective system.

Members showed their support for this Notice of Motion and highlighted the great work of Roscommon County Council, the ESB and all community groups throughout during Storm Éowyn. Members acknowledged the importance of the TETRA system and back up power is vital for the effectiveness of this system.

Chief Executive, Shane Tiernan advised that he sits as one of the Chief Executives nominated to the board of the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management and added that this issue has been discussed extensively. He informed Members that most recently a presentation was made on the resilience of the TETRA network. TETRA claims the network and towers are resilient but that the power wasn't, and the battery back up died. TETRA reported 91% of vehicle mobile coverage was maintained throughout the storm. He concluded stating that the board has raised this issue and sought answers for future storm events.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Frain

SECONDED by Cllr. Holland

It was **AGREED** to write to the Minister for Housing and Local Government and the National Directorate of Fire and Emergency Management, and enquire as to what measures have been taken to ensure that the "National Mobilizing and Communication System" will have its own independent power supply to deliver Fire Services Emergency Communications (TETRA) in the event of further storms? During Storm Éowyn, the system relied on third party sites without any back up power supply, resulting in the failure of this critical infrastructure.

175.25 CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

Nothing further to note.

176.25 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES - PAYMENT/ATTENDANCE

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Conboy

SECONDED by Cllr. Keogh

It was **AGREED** to adopt the list of payments for training and conferences as circulated.

177.25 VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS AND SYMPATHY

Expressions of Sympathy

- Cathaoirleach Cllr. Callaghan extended his sympathies to Cllr. Connolly and his family on the passing of his sister Carmel Brady. Members and the Management Team also extended their sympathies to Cllr. Connolly.
- Sympathies were extended by the Members to Roscommon County Council employees Breege and Tom McDermott on the passing of their mother.
- Sympathies were extended to the family of Mary Cribbin, Castleplunkett, who passed away recently.
- Sympathies were also extended to the family of Helen O'Brien, Athlone, who recently passed away. Helen was in the B&B business for over 25 years and it was remarked she was a great community person.

Congratulations were offered to John McDermott from Boyle who was a member of the relay team who broke the over 80's 4 x 400m 2011 world record recently.

Members wished St Brigid's GAA and Strokestown GAA good luck in their All-Ireland Semi Finals coming up.

Cllr. Crosby congratulated colleague Cllr. Fallon on his appointment to the Chairperson of the LCDC.

178.25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Creevy Road

Cllr. Holland requested an update on Creevy Road. He believed the developer met with Roscommon County Council on site and sought the outcome of this meeting.

Director of Services, Mark Keaveney, in response confirmed there was a meeting, but he did not have the information to hand and follow up with Cllr. Holland on this.

Mercosur Deal

Cllr. Fallon raised concerns regarding the Mercosur Deal, stating that stringent controls apply in Ireland in relation to the use of animal remedies, which must be prescribed by a veterinary practitioner. He further stated that approximately 99,000 tonnes of beef enter Ireland at low tariff rates from countries where regulatory standards and traceability systems are not considered equivalent to those in Ireland. Cllr. Fallon expressed the view that the meat element of the deal should be removed, noting that several countries have already rejected the agreement.

Members, including Cathaoirleach Cllr. Callaghan, expressed agreement with Cllr. Fallon's concerns and supported his proposal, stating that, at a minimum, imported meat should meet standards equivalent to those applied to Irish beef production.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fallon

SECONDED by Cllr. Ward

It was **AGREED** to write to the Minister to express serious concerns about the inclusion of beef imports within the Mercosur trade agreement. It is requested to at least reject the meat element of the Mercosur deal, and if this is not possible to reject the deal in its entirety.

The level of control of imported beef is not at a level we deem acceptable for human consumption. Therefore, the beef element of the Mercosur deal should be removed from the current trade discussions until such time as the countries in South America implement systems comparable to Ireland's in terms of traceability and animal welfare.

Wind Farms

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Duffy

SECONDED by Cllr. Keogh

It was **AGREED** to formally request Bord na Móna and An Coimisiún Pleanála to meet with Members to discuss the introduction and operation of wind farms.

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Callaghan thanked the Management Team and the Members for their support and work throughout 2025. He wished all the people of County Roscommon a Happy Christmas.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Monday, 26th January, 2026.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:



Meetings Administrator



Countersigned



Cathaoirleach