



6 Clanbrassil Street
Dundalk
Co. Louth
A91 E128
Tel : 042 933 6343
Fax : 042 935 4942

Email : info@dundalk.ie
www.dundalk.ie

28th August 2026

To the Chief Executive and Elected Members of Louth County Council,

Re: Submission on the Notice of Consideration of a Scheme for the Abatement of Rates in Respect of Vacant Properties (2027 Financial Year)

On behalf of Dundalk Chamber and our membership, I am writing to present our formal submission regarding the proposed Scheme for the Abatement of Rates in Respect of Vacant Properties for the 2027 financial year.

The Chamber strongly supports the local authority's continued policy direction regarding commercial rate abatements on vacant properties and advocates for its full continuation into 2027.

1. How Council Policy and BIDS Revitalised Dundalk's Main Streets

Dundalk's core retail streets, including Clanbrassil Street, Church Street, and Park Street, currently have exceptionally low commercial vacancy rates. Over the past decade, vacancy on streets like Clanbrassil Street has been dramatically turned around, moving from above 50% to single-digit percentage figures today.

The Council's policy direction, coupled with the work of Dundalk BIDS, has had a transformative effect over the last decade. The proactive efforts by BIDS in matching prospective tenants with property owners, alongside town centre regeneration, have turned potential long-term vacant units into busy units.

2. Retention of the 0% Rate Abatement on Vacant Properties

We strongly back the Council's decision to maintain a 0% rate abatement for sitting vacant commercial properties.

Historically, generous vacancy relief allowed commercial properties to sit idle without significant financial consequences for landlords, creating pockets of dereliction.

By keeping the abatement at 0%, the financial onus remains directly on the property owner to bring vacant holdings back into active commercial use swiftly, rather than sitting on empty premises. This policy incentivises landlords to get tenants into shop premises and thus helps ensure town-centre footprints are maximised for enterprise.

3. Support for the Structured Rates Waiver for New Tenants

The Chamber fully endorses the Council's structured rates waiver incentive scheme for new businesses taking up long-term vacant units.

The phased approach, providing new tenants entering long-term vacant properties with a structured rates plan, lowers the barrier to entry, encourages retail and service diversification, and actively turns empty storefronts into rate-paying commercial assets for the county. However, the Chamber recommends that vape shops be explicitly excluded from accessing this structured rates waiver scheme.

Conclusion & Recommendation

Dundalk's main streets are currently seeing the benefits of active management, Council support, and clear economic incentives. Relaxing vacancy abatement back to passive rate discounts would represent a step backward for town-centre regeneration.

We urge Louth County Council to:

- Maintain the 0% vacancy rate abatement policy for 2027 to keep property owners focused on quick re-letting.
- Continue and promote the structured rate waiver scheme to support new commercial tenants.
- Maintain strong alignment with Dundalk BIDS to ensure ongoing vibrant, low-vacancy streetscapes.