

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE
GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Ceantar Bardasach Bhaile Átha an Rí
Municipal District of Athenry**

**Minutes of the Budget Meeting of the Municipal District of Athenry held in
Aras an Chontae, on Tuesday, 15th October, 2024.**

I LATHAIR:

BAILL: Cllr. P. Feeney (Cathaoirleach)
Cllr. T. Grealish
Cllr. A. Dolan
Cllr. L. O'Hara
Cllr. D. Collins
Cllr. C. Keane

OIFIGIGH: Mr. L. Hanrahan, DoS
Ms. K. O'Connor, HoF,
Ms. A. Fenton, M.A.
Ms R. Lowe, S.E.
Ms. M. Duddy, A.O.
Ms. M. Jordan, A.O.

LEITHSCÉALTA: Cllr. J. Charity

To consider and adopt (with or without amendment) under Section 58 of the Local Government Reform Act, 2014, a Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Athenry as prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed everyone to the budget meeting for the Athenry MD.

Ms. O'Connor presented the budget as follows:

In accordance with Section 58 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014, Ms. O'Connor underlined to Members the draft budgetary plan for the Athenry Municipal District (MD) for 2025 showing an indicative expenditure of €4,697,510, an increase on the updated 2024 expenditure.

Members were notified that in June 2024 the 2025 Local Property Tax allocation for Galway County was €20,309,071. In preparing the draft budgetary plan Ms. O'Connor stated that the decision taken by the Council at the LPT meeting held on 23rd September 2024 to increase the

local property tax rate by 15% for five years has been included, resulting in an increase in the LPT of €2,370,963 for 2025.

Ms. O'Connor elaborated on the three main stages of the overall budgetary process being (i) decision on the Local Property Tax, (ii) consideration of the draft Municipal District Budgetary Plan and (iii) the consideration of the Draft overall Budget for Galway County Council. Stating that the overall process made more difficult as the full budgetary information is unavailable at the first two steps and information available in mid-September in advance of the LPT decision indicated a deficit gap between Income and Expenditure of €10.8m.

Further explaining the GMA allocation as the discretionary funding which is available to the municipal members for allocation in the draft plan Ms. O'Connor outlined that the D0905 GMA is a proportion of the local property tax allocation to each MD.

Ms. O'Connor described this a great opportunity for each MD to focus on larger scale projects and use this as leverage to raise match funding for projects. The funding will be allocated each year for the next five years to the revenue account. The unspent money at the end of each year will transfer to a capital account and accumulate year on year. Clarifying that a specific meeting will be held for members to bring forward a list of projects and work with the Mayor, Chairs and Director of Services to agree on projects through the injection of the LPT funds over the next five years and bring forward to be noted at Plenary.

Ms. O'Connor requested for members to consider by resolution the draft budgetary plan to adopt with or without amendment.

The Members made the following comments:

- The Members welcomed the increase of €390,000 on last year's budget.
- The Athenry MD has the largest volume of traffic but only gets 10 per cent of the budget.
- It was agreed at a plenary meeting that if any extra funding became available for the roads programme a percentage would be given to Oranmore MD.
- A query was raised on how LPT to be spent and distributed.
- Welcomed the increase in the code F0502 and requested a breakdown of the recipients of the funding for 2024.
- What options are available to Members in relation to the changes to expenditure between codes.
- A breakdown on the use of funding for street sweeping would be useful for Members.

Ms. Lowe responded to queries raised as follows:

- Ms. Lowe said that in code B0402 that roads funding was distributed pro rata basis on the km per municipal district and is updated each year.
- There was a motion passed at a previous Plenary meeting that 10% of additional funding would be allocated to roads within a 25km radius of Galway City.

- Athenry MD has benefited significantly from other Roads Grants in previous years with funding being available for the Dual Carriageway under the 'Former National Roads Scheme.'
- Code E0601 is an Environment Code, and the expenditure is by area office.
- A service plan can be put in place for the Athenry MD with input from the Athenry Members.

Ms O'Connor responded to queries raised as follows:

- The roads funding code B0301 is allocated on roads as a percentage of regional road per kilometre.
- The figure in the draft budgetary plan is an estimate and funding will be available at a future date under the roads programme.
- LPT is one third of €800,000 and is calculated by dividing total number of Councillors (39) and multiplying by the number of members in each MD. The Members can agree on projects that they want to carry out for example expenditure can be made on one or two big projects. They can also examine the option of projects that can attract match funding. The funding comes from the revenue account will be transferred to the capital account for expenditure on the agreed projects.
- The layout of the GMA is set out in the Department Circular.
- The breakdown of recipients of funding under F0502 will be circulated to Members.
- If funding is changed in the codes, there will be an increase in one area, but another area will have less funding. There is little scope for making changes on the funding.

Cllr. O'Hara expressed that Athenry had insufficient funding compared to other MDs and felt funding was unfairly distributed. He was not in favour of the budget.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Collins **SECONDED** by Cllr. Keane the members agreed to adopt without amendments, under Section 58 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014, a Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Athenry, as prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive.

The next meeting of the Athenry MD will take place on Tuesday 12th November 2024, and the Cathaoirleach proposed that the meeting take place in the Bia Innovation Centre in Athenry. Mr Keane said that he would be in favour of the meetings taking place in different locations.

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Approved by:


CATHAOIRLEACH

Date: 11/11/24

