

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Ceantar Bardasach Bhaile Locha Riach
Municipal District of LOUGHREA

Minutes of Budget Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea
held in the Loughrea Area Office on 14th October 2024 at 10.30 am

I LATHAIR:

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Martina Kinane

As Lathair Cllr. Michael Maher

Baill: Cllr. Geraldine Donohue
Cllr. Ivan Canning
Cllr. Shane Curley
Cllr. Gerry Finnerty
Cllr. Declan Kelly
Cllr Paul Killilea
Cllr. Jimmy McClearn
Cllr. PJ Murphy

Oifigigh: Ms. E. Ruane, Director of Services
Ms. K. O'Connor, Head of Finance
Ms. Á. Fenton, Financial Accountant
Ms. R. Lowe, Senior Engineer
Ms. M. Flynn, Administrative Officer
Ms. M. Duddy, Administrative Officer
Ms. S. Cleary, Staff Officer

Leithscealta:

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 Loughrea, as prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive.

Ms. O'Connor, Head of Finance, briefed Members on the detail presented in the draft budgetary plan for the Loughrea Municipal District (MD) for 2025 showing an indicative expenditure of €12,000,885 an increase on the updated 2024 expenditure.

Members were notified that in June 2024 the 2025 Local Property Tax (LPT) 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 results 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 the overall process was made more difficult as the full budgetary information is unavailable for 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 decisions to be brought before Plenary to be noted.

In accordance with Section 58 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 Ms. O'Connor requested the members to consider by resolution to adopt with or without amendment the draft budgetary plan for the Loughrea Municipal District.

The members thanked Ms. O'Connor and the Finance Team for their presentation.

Commenting on the LPT increase Cllr. Kinane acknowledged the difficult decision taken to increase the LPT which she fully supported and noted the increase being larger in Loughrea area in comparison to other MD's which will benefit the MD positively and people will yield the benefit.

Cllr. Donohue raised a query under Sub-Service E0201 Recycling Facilities Operations regarding Gort Civic amenity. In response Ms. Ruane confirmed this was provided through capital account and update to issue from Environment Section.

Cllr. Canning queried the allocation under E0901 Maintenance of Burial grounds given number of volunteers that maintain grounds. Ms. Flynn confirmed this covers maintenance grants and minor works.

Cllr. McClearn welcome the budget and stated to make changes you must find money.

Commenting on the need to commence planning for community projects, Cllr. Finnerty stated how difficult the process is for submitting funding applications.

Cllr. Curly queried if taken in charge was factored into housing maintenance and commented on the increase against D0905 yet local roads allocation is reduced.

Ms. O'Connor responded by outlining that LPT money included in D0905 with other items. One third of LPT is split amongst the 39 members of Galway County Council and then multiplied by number of members in each Municipal District. Elaborating how Councillors bring forward to MD proposals and agree key points Ms. O'Connor added the opportunity to agree on a concept resulting in something tangible. Unspent monies in a year will move to a capital code which can be used to leverage part funding.

Ensuing discussion Cllr. Kinane added the intention if the draft budget is adopted the MD will hold a special meeting to discuss programme of works and plan how to utilise the fund over the five years.

In response to roads budget Ms. Lowe commented that the GMA is a combination of grant codes with final allocation to regional roads being confirmed in February 2025. Certain contract works can be displaced within Section B budgets but ultimately non-discretionary.

Cllr. Murphy raised query assuming the running costs of MD for employment of staff. Ms. O'Connor confirmed such expenditure is covered in main budget not split by MD.

Cllr. Kelly enquired as to the expenditure under operation of street parking, which Ms. O'Connor confirmed covers parking enforcement and maintenance contracts. Discussion ensued with the abuse of disabled parking, lack of designated identification. In response Ms. Lowe and Mr. Dunne were aware of the matter and had issues with concrete sub surface which they agreed to revisit.

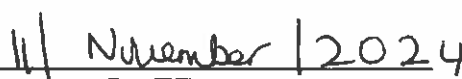
Cllr. Kinane welcomed an increase in parks pitches and open spaces and expressed interest if installation of urns walls has been considered for future cemeteries and possible opportunity to increase funding for installation works to address long term issues with space. Ms. Ruane confirmed F0301 uplift proposing to allocate to car park space and Ms. Finn confirmed development in transition period plots is on programme.

The members thanked Ms. O'Connor and the Finance Team for their presentation.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McClearn **SECONDED** by Cllr. Donohue 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 Loughrea, as prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive.

CHRIOGHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN


CLLR MARTINA KINANE


DATE

