

**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET MEETING OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF TUAM HELD AT
THE OFFICES OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF TUAM, TUAM, COUNTY GALWAY
ON MONDAY 14th October 2024 AT 1.30pm.**

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. Peter Roche

I LÁTHAIR FREISIN: Leas Chathaoirleach Ollie Turner, Cllr. Shaun Cunneiffe, Cllr. Mary Hoade,
Cllr. Karey McHugh Farag, Cllr. Andrew Reddington, Cllr. Donagh Mark Killilea,

AS LÁTHAIR:

BAILL OIFIGIGH: Ms. Katie O'Connor, Head of Finance, Mr. Michael Owens, Director of Services,
Ms. Rachel Lowe, Snr. Engineer Infrastructure, Ms. Áine Fenton, Financial
Accountant, Ms. Martha Duddy, Administrative Officer, Finance, Ms. Geraldine
Byrne - Meetings Administrator, Ms. Sinéad Naughton, Staff Officer.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed everyone to the meeting convened 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 Tuam as prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive.

Ms. O'Connor, Head of Finance presented the budget showing an indicative expenditure of €7,649,507 which is an increase on the 2024 expenditure. Budget 2025 has anticipated increased expenditure in roads and housing maintenance expenditure and specific projects as outlined by the MDs.

Ms. O'Connor outlined that in June 2024 the 2025 Local Property Tax allocation for Galway County was €20,309,071 (pending any decision to locally vary the basic rate). In preparing the draft budgetary plan the decision taken at the Council Meeting held on 23rd September 2024 to increase the local property tax rate by 15% for five years has been accounted for which 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 that the overall process was 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 requested for members to consider by resolution the draft budgetary plan to adopt with or without amendment.

The Chair and Members thanked Ms. O'Connor for the presentation.

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Cllr. Hoade observed the increase in relation to LPT adding this must deliver back into the area so projects can carry through to the full potential. Discussion ensued surrounding funding under C0401 Public Conveniences and funding required for maintenance of burial grounds and operation of street cleaning.

Cllr. Cuniffe remarked on his main priorities being cleanliness of the town, for paths\roads improvements, investment in weed control, regular cleaning of pavements\cycle lanes maintenance budget and for the Town Hall programme to resume. Noting expenditure items in the budget being dictated centrally Cllr. Cuniffe acknowledged working within statutory regulations gives little power as controlled by central government which gives very little scope in comparison to Tuam's needs.

Discussion ensued regarding rate collection in the Tuam area.

The matter of upkeeping public realm was raised by Cllr. McHugh questioning if this was a legislative or biodiversity matter where weed killer is not used in public conveniences. Cllr. McHugh requested review transfer of community funding which was a legacy issue.

A Notice of Motion was proposed:

"That we transfer €10,000 from C0401 to E0901 Maintenance of Burial Grounds and €10,000 to E0601 Operation of street cleaning." Proposed by Cllr. Hoade and seconded by Cllr. McHugh.

Cllr. Turner raised queries surrounding clarification on the burial grounds covered by Galway County Council, requested details regarding D0905 allocation and queried if the allocation was realistic for the operation of street parking, if that was solely for the Tuam area or other areas.

Cllr. Reddington raised issues in relation to footpath maintenance and questioned if there was consideration for Active Travel funding and commented that the previous Director of Service committed to footpath repair.

Ms. O'Connor addressed queries confirming that a provision for burial grounds is made through a capital transfer for the purchase of land, the FO504 is a total across Galway in relation to Athenry heritage.

Regarding discussion on the rate collection in the Tuam area Ms. O'Connor explained that the GMA circular prescribed format focuses on expenditure, the rate collections\LPT is centrally looked at rather than each MD and cannot be retained locally with equalization as part of the reason why centrally dealt with.

In response to the query on the D0905 Economic Development and promotion Ms. O'Connor explained that the LPT allocation was divided by the 39 Councillors and multiplied by the number of Councillors per MD which was decided upon at MD level. The Director will steer the capsule projects and it is intended that the LPT increase of 15% each year for the next 5 years if money is unspent will move to capital account and accumulate if not used in year two or three it will roll over and could be used for co-funding. Further explaining Ms. O'Connor advised this discussion will be held at a separate meeting where Councillors will bring forward the proposals and decide on how the money will be administered. Each MD will agree and signed off at Plenary for governance.

In response to queries on cleanliness and maintenance upkeep, Ms. Lowe stated that Local and Regional Road maintenance have no specific code for footpaths it's covered in the general maintenance fund and further added that this does not specifically allow for works to be carried out under this funding. As regards Active Travel funding Ms. Lowe commented that this has been with the Minister to review funding roll out of new infrastructure to include maintenance associated requirement. In response to Biodiversity to be dealt with through the URDF public realms.

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Commenting on the budget for Twinning, Cllr. Killilea requested that code D0903 be considered and Proposed Notice of Motion

“That Tuam MD will continue to secure funding for our twinning partners in our area. I propose to transfer €3000 from F0401 to D0903 Twinning. I further propose that Tuam, Headford and Dunmore would share this equally.” Proposed by Cllr. Killilea and seconded by Cllr. Turner.

“That the following groups would receive a payment of €750 euro from Tuam MD Twinning Budget Dunmore Twinning Committee, Headford Twinning Committee and Tuam Twinning Committee.” Proposer: Cllr. Killilea Seconder Cllr. Reddington

Cllr. Hoade requested for the list of burial grounds to be circulated to all members outlining those operated by under OPW remit.

Cllr. Roche commented on the potential for tangible and measurable projects that will hold the council to act responsibly to deliver on the desired program collectively with proposals and identify costings. Appreciating cash flow issues Cllr. Roche explained Councillors will make a business case pending on resources of the organisation and work with the Directors time frame and cash flows capacity to be discussed at another MD meeting. Acknowledging that the LPT allocation does empower and give discretion in this regard.

Cllr. Cunniffe queried the proportion of income collected by rates from a representative perspective some correlation to collection rate within the MD's. Cllr. Killilea was at odds with the comment.

Ms. O'Connor confirmed this is factored into the central government divided into pay and non-pay wages are included Cllr. Roache clarified it didn't intend and can we make an agreement with drawn comment.

The general operation maintenance for parking and display. With regard to Road maintenance to put aside or to draw on a budget Rachel Lowe echoed the head of finance GMA rules little flexibility ring fencing push or pull cuts in other areas work with the team notice the motion proposal suggested but how to balance against other programs active travel is a national dialogue maintenance required

Cllr. Hoade raised concerns of dangerous verge and condition that roads commenting this was not acceptable that there's no money to the repair the roads with potential insurance risks.

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. Hoade, SECONDED by Cllr. McHugh the members agreed to adopt with agreed amendments, under Section 58 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014, a Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Tuam, as prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive.

Chríochnaigh an cruinniú ansin @ 14.45

Approved by:

Date: _____

Cllr. Roche, Cathaoirleach.