

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF LOUGHREA

MINUTES OF DRAFT BUDGETARY PLAN MEETING OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF LOUGHREA HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ON MONDAY, 20th OCTOBER 2025 AT 10.00 a.m.

<u>Cathaoirleach:</u>	Cllr. P. Killilea
<u>Baill:</u>	Cllrs. M. Regan, D. Kelly, J. McClearn, M. Kinane, G. Donohue, L. Harney.
<u>Baill as Láthair:</u>	Cllrs. I. Canning, G. Finnerty, M. Maher.
<u>Oifigigh:</u>	Ms. E. Ruane Director of Services, Ms. K. O'Connor Head of Finance, Ms. A. Fenton Financial Accountant, Mr. D. Troy A/Senior Engineer, Mr. G. Haugh Senior Executive Engineer, Mr. N. Kennedy Executive Engineer, Mr. D. O'Loughlin Executive Engineer, Ms. O. Cloonan Assistant Staff Officer, Ms. M. McGann Meetings Administrator.

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

LMD/2446

Ms. O'Connor presented the Draft Budgetary Plan for the Loughrea Municipal District for 2026. Ms. O'Connor noted that the draft budgetary plan shows an indicative expenditure of €12,850,737 which is an increase over 2025 expenditure. This expenditure anticipates increased spending on roads, housing maintenance, and other specific projects within the Municipal District. Ms. O'Connor advised that the 15% LPT increase amounts to €2,581,838 for 2026 and noted that a proportion of this is allocated to the discretionary funding made available to each Municipal District under the GMA (General Municipal Allocation). Ms. O'Connor noted that this is intended to be utilized by Elected Members for local authority infrastructure projects or community capital projects, with a particular focus on larger-scale projects and leveraging match funding for projects of scale.

Ms. O'Connor stated that the budgetary process was made more difficult due to lack of full budgetary information on items such as the amount of financial support from government, requirement for bad debts provision and appeals on commercial rates revaluations, and potential impact of funding gaps related to retained fire fighters, Uisce Éireann stranded costs, and changes in economic activity or unemployment. Based on available information, there was a deficit between income and expenditure of c. €11m, and work was continuing programme-by-programme to bridge this gap. Ms. O'Connor noted that the budget was overwhelmingly non-discretionary in nature leaving little scope to recommend amendments at Municipal District level and referred to the schedule of expenditure which outlined the Municipal District expenditure by programme area.

Cllr. Donohue stressed the importance of an allocation for swimming areas to enable facilities and public conveniences to be available on an extended basis throughout the year rather than just the bathing season, as current weather patterns were facilitating extended usage of bathing areas. In response, Ms. Ruane advised that extended opening and caretaking of public conveniences at amenity areas was being looked at in the context of the development of revised duties for water services staff not redeploying to Uisce Éireann.

Cllr. Kinane stressed the importance of adequate provision for outdoor recreation amenities and queried the maintenance costs for the Cow Park Clarinbridge in light of recent damage to the boardwalk. In response, Ms. O'Connor advised that repairs would be required to be covered under the allocation for Programme F0301 'Parks, Pitches & Open Spaces' unless there was scope for an assessment of any suitable grant applications at this time.

Cllr. McClearn welcomed the increase of €856,664 over 2025 expenditure, and the increased funding for roads, and stressed the need for public conveniences at bathing areas to be open, with at a minimum disabled toilet facilities to be open. In response, Ms. O'Connor stated that this was part of the wider discussions on the budget regarding redeployment of staff.

In response to a query from Cllr. Donohue regarding the budget for housing maintenance, Ms. O'Connor clarified that this budget related to ongoing and planned maintenance, rather than turnover of voids.

Cllr. Regan welcomed the additional budget for Loughrea Municipal District and stated that his main issue of concern was ensuring that essential facilities such as public toilets and showers at the Loughrea Lake were available year-round and proposed that a tender to invite other uses of this space, and keep facilities open, be invited as a matter of urgency. In response, Ms. Ruane advised that the Municipal District was currently looking at a methodology to draw up such a tender and invite submissions.

In response to queries from Cllr. Finnerty, Ms. O'Connor confirmed that the Draft Budgetary Plan presented to the Members were indicative figures, and as such, the final allocations will be decided on the adoption of the 2026 Budget at the Plenary Budget Meeting on 14th November 2025, and accounting for the costs of inflation alone, resulted in increased expenditure of €4m across programme expenditure.

It was proposed by Cllr. Kinane, seconded by Cllr. McClearn, and agreed by the Members, that the Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Loughrea as prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive be adopted.

CHRIOCHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN

Signed: Paul Killelea Date: 10th November 2025