

## MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE

### MINUTES OF DRAFT BUDGETARY PLAN 2020 MEETING OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE HELD ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL, GALWAY ON WEDNESDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> OCTOBER 2019 AT 2 P.M.

**CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. T. Broderick

**I LATHAIR FREISIN:**

**Baill:** Cllrs. D. Connolly, M. Connolly, A. Dolan, D. Geraghty, P. Keaveney

**Oifigigh:** Mr. A. Farrell, A/Director of Services, Mr. G. Mullarkey, Head of Finance, Mr. Michael McGovern, Management Accountant; Mr. D. Mitchell, Senior Engineer, Mr. E. Mulryan, A/Senior Executive Engineer, Mr. Eamonn Lydon, Executive Engineer, Mr. P. McLynn, Assistant Engineer, Ms. A. Monaghan, Staff Officer; Ms. Anne Gardiner, Administrative Officer, Mr. J. Moore, Clerical Officer.

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

**MDB19051**

Cllr. Broderick welcomed everyone to the meeting and re-iterated the only agenda item was 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 Ballinasloe, as prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive. He asked Mr. Mullarkey (Head of Finance) to give an overview of the main points of the draft Budget outline.

Mr. Mullarkey advised that the only significant increase in funding for 2020 arose under the roads grants which were up €3.5M county wide on the 2019 budget. Mr. Mullarkey noted that the roads budget was distributed on a per kilometre basis and that the allocations reflected the revised boundaries for 2020. Mr. Mullarkey noted that the total budget under the non road headings were broadly similar to last year and that any changes reflected the change in the boundaries.

There followed a detailed review of the document from those present.

Cllr. Broderick asked why Local Roads General Improvements Works (B0406) had decreased and Mr. Mullarkey stated that this was because of a decrease in the grant allocation for Local Improvement Schemes.

Cllr. Dolan asked why the Environmental Awareness Code budget allocation was down. Mr. Mullarkey replied that the funding allocated to this was spilt equally between each MD this year so each MD got 20%, resulting in the reduction.

Cllr. Dolan asked for clarity on the increase in Street Cleaning and Mr. Mullarkey replied that this was for additional towns because of the extended boundaries now within the MD.

Cllr. Dolan asked what was the largest Municipal District and was told that while Connemara was the largest in terms of area, Loughrea was the largest in terms of population.

Cllr. Dolan asked about the burial sites increase and whether this was related to the area increase and Mr. Mullarkey confirmed it was.

Cllr. M. Connolly made the point that Galway County Council was operating at a deficit and that there were many roads that were in a poor condition. Mr. M. Connolly asked what percentage increase had the MD received and whether it was an increase overall or based upon the overall extension of the district. Mr. Mullarkey replied that county wide roads grants were up €3.5 million and that this was distributed on a per km basis and that the draft figures reflected this and the revised boundaries.

Cllr. M. Connolly asked whether contractor costs were becoming more expensive since improvements in the general economy. Mr. Mulryan confirmed that there were increases in labour, fuels among other costs with contractors. Mr. Mulryan stated that Galway County Council would like to get more work completed but they were dependent on the allocation of funding from the government.

Cllr. D. Connolly noted his disappointment in the levels of overall funding allocated and stated that allocations such as the Maintenance of Housing units and Estate Maintenance were really inadequate and that some of these areas were in a very poor condition. Cllr. D. Connolly also stated that there were no increases in litter control and that this would lead to more fly tipping and litter blackspots getting worse. He stated more resources were needed here and that in general he had seen a massive deterioration of services since 2014 with the discontinuation of the town councils and front-line services. He stated that a stand needed to be taken to raise these concerns.

Cllr. Geraghty stated that the condition of the roads around his area were poor compared to Roscommon and other counties and with new housing estates in Glenamaddy and Williamstown he asked how could the Council hope to achieve a proper roads programme. He stated he did not believe there was enough funding in the budget due to the size of the area. He stated that the continuing cost of overheads and the impact of Health and Safety had resulted in low morale among those working in the area.

Mr. Mitchell stated he did not agree on the poor state of the roads and stated that the quality of the roads were very similar to all other Municipal Districts. He also pointed to the NOAC report that stated Galway was in the middle percentage across the country in terms of road

quality. He agreed that more funding would be of benefit but said that the onus on Health and Safety is a result of legislation that had to be met.

Cllr. Keaveney welcomed the general funding increases that was stated but noted that the litter control initiatives had not increased and asked if there was something that could be looked at to help this.

Mr. Mullarkey replied that except for the roads funding increase there were no other increases and no indication of further funding as of this moment.

Cllr. M. Connolly raised the issue of invasive plants such as Japanese Knotweed and other poisonous plants such as Ragwort and asked what were the measures in place to combat these as they were very quickly getting out of control.

Mr. Mitchell stated in reference to Ragwort that if it was on a landowner's property, it was their responsibility. Mr. Mitchell stated that if it was on the side of the road it was the Councils responsibility. In reference to Knotweed, Mr. Mitchell referenced a presentation given the previous year which recommended that a database of occurrences of knotweed should be drawn up and that this is currently what was being completed. Mr. Mitchell stated that the treatment of Knotweed was a long term project because it required the plant be removed over a four year period.

Cllr. Dolan asked about the Heritage and Interpretative Facilities and the funding allocated for them and specifically for the Aughtrim facility.

Mr. Mullarkey replied that there was a specific funding of €24,000 in place for Aughtrim.

Cllr. Broderick raised the issue of a required allocation of €1,500 towards the Ballinasloe Town Clock. There followed a lengthy discussion on the general requirements of this funding, where this funding should be allocated from and whether it should come from existing codes or some other section such as Corporate Services or Community grants. On the proposal of Cllr. Geraghty, seconded by Cllr. Broderick it was proposed "to have a stand alone code for the Ballinasloe Town Clock and that monies from the operations of Street Parking of €1,500 be used for the maintenance of this famous Town Clock annually". Following discussion, Mr. Mullarkey stated that he would see if funding could be allocated from the statutory Budget towards maintenance of the Town Clock.

It was proposed by Cllr. Keaveney, seconded by Cllr. Dolan that the Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Ballinasloe, as prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive be adopted. This was not agreed.

It was proposed by Cllr. D. Connolly, seconded by Cllr. M. Connolly that the Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Ballinasloe, as prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive not be adopted.

The counter proposal that the Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Ballinasloe, as prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive not be adopted was taken first. A roll call vote taken on the proposal resulted as follows:

**For:** Cllrs. M. Connolly, Geraghty and Connolly. (3)

**Against:** Cllrs. Keaveney, Broderick and Dolan (3)

As the result was tied, the Chair Cllr. Broderick exercised his casting vote and the proposal was defeated.

The original proposal that the Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Ballinasloe, as prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive be adopted was then taken. A roll call vote taken on the proposal resulted as follows:

**For:** Cllrs. M. Connolly, Geraghty and Connolly (3)

**Against:** Cllrs. Keaveney, Broderick and Dolan (3)

As the result was tied, the Chair Cllr. Broderick exercised his casting vote and declared that the Draft Budgetary Plan 2020 was adopted.

Cllr. Broderick thanked all for their attendance and participation and declared the meeting closed.

#### CHRIOCHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN

**Submitted, Approved and Signed**



**(Cathaoirleach to sign here)**

13.11.2019.

**(Date)**