

Minutes of the Municipal District of Loughrea budget meeting held  
on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020

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**MINUTES OF BUDGET MEETING OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF LOUGHREA**  
**HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL,**  
**GALWAY**

**ON THURSDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2020 AT 2.30 PM**

***I LÁTHAIR:***

***BAILL:***

Cllr Michael “Moegie” Maher

Cllr Joe Byrne

Cllr Ivan Canning

Cllr PJ Murphy

Cllr Shane Curley

Cllr Geraldine Donoghue

Cllr Pat Hynes

Cllr Martina Kinane

Cllr Jimmy Mc Clearn

Cllr Pat Hynes

***OIFIGIGH:***

Mr. Ger Mullarkey, Head of Finance

Mr. Michael McGovern, Management Account

Ms. Eileen Ruane, Director of Services, Planning Environment & Emergency Services

Mr. Gerard Haugh, Senior Executive Engineer, Municipal District of Loughrea

Mr. Aidan Cunningham, A/Senior Staff Officer, Planning, Environment & Emergency Services

Mr. Brendan Sheehy, Assistant Engineer

Mr. Feidhlim McGillycuddy, Exectuive Engineer, Gort

Mr. Damien Mitchell, Senior Engineer

Ms Alison Ruane, Clerical Officer, Finance Department

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**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.**

Cllr Maher welcomed everyone to the meeting where the draft budget for the Municipal District of Loughrea 2021 is to be discussed.

Mr. Mullarkey gave a summary of the budgetary position. He explained that the Council incurred expenditure across many services. These services were part funded by way of Government Grants and income from goods and services. This left a balance referred to as net expenditure which had to be funded. He then outlined that the two main sources of funding available to the Council were Local Property Tax (LPT) and Commercial Rates. He noted that at the September meeting the Councillors had elected not to vary the LPT, in addition he outlined that the CPG had requested that the draft budget should not reflect an increase in Commercial Rates. He noted that at this point in time there was no indication of any additional funding being made available from central Government. He also noted that the report presented to the September meeting had indicated that there was an estimated excess of expenditure over the projected income. Given that the LPT and Commercial rates were not being increased he stated that in order to produce a balanced budget, reductions in expenditure would be required. He explained that the draft budget before the members reflected that approach. He also explained that the Roads Grants for budget 2021 would reflect the actual allocations received in 2020 and that this represents an increase over the amounts budgeted for in 2020. The actual roads grants for 2021 would be notified in February 2021 and would be reflected in the schedule of municipal district works and road programme for 2021.

Mr. Mullarkey also confirmed that on the advice of the CPG the proposed additional funding of €1 Million had not been reflected as part of the MD budgets and would be considered further by the CPG.

A general discussion then commenced. Cllr Martina Kinane queried why service F0301 was only getting €18k out of the total €176k general municipal allocation for the county and noted that other MD's appeared to be getting a larger share. Mr. Mullarkey confirmed that due to an administrative error the budget for Renville park which had transferred to the Loughrea MD following boundary changes had been mistakenly included in the Athenry MD budget. He confirmed that the budget amount of €45K would be provided for Renville Park therefore the budget for service F0301 would be €63K for 2021.

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In general Councillors expressed satisfaction at the increase in roads funding but expressed disappointment at the reduction in the discretionary headings such as maintenance of housing units, economic development and the area of community grants.

Cllr Byrne welcomed the overall increase in roads grant funding in the budget. He proposed that an amount of €12,780 be transferred from subservice A0101 Maintenance of LA Housing Units to subservice F0401 Community Grants and this proposal was seconded by Cllr McClearn.

Cllr Shane Curley stated that he felt there was a disparity in the funding granted toward street cleaning services in the Loughrea M.D. considering towns of the size of Loughrea, Gort and Portumna within the M.D. He questioned why the share amounted to 17% of the total General Municipal Allocation. Mr. Mullarkey stated that amounts allocated had been adjusted due to boundary changes. Damien Mitchell agreed to look at the figures allocated for this activity across the 5 municipal districts. Cllr McClearn asked for assurances in passing the budget that the Loughrea Municipal District was getting a fair allocation for this activity.

Concern was expressed amongst the Councillors at the allocation towards subservice E0201 Recycling Facilities Operations considering the recent proposal for the development of a new Civic Amenity centre in Gort. Cllr Joe Byrne requested an overview be given on the stages of the project for the proposed CAS with projections for capital and running costs.

Cllr McClearn questioned the staffing numbers in the Building Control Unit of the Council in comparison to other areas of the Council which he believed were understaffed. He felt that the high standards demanded of private properties differed to those being applied to the Council's own housing stock.

Cllr Kinnane expressed disappointment with the €7,750 allocated against subservice D0905 Economic Development and Promotion considering costs of running promotional events in the area. Mr. Mullarkey stated that this subservice was linked to the subservice for Community Grants which is recorded separately. Cllr. Kinnane asked for further clarification on how these monies have been spent.

Mr. Mullarkey advised that to produce a balanced budget, cuts needed to be made in the areas of discretionary expenditure as noted. He pointed out to the members that the Housing maintenance for the municipal district had been reduced by 10% and that the Loughrea Municipal District had the biggest number of social housing units in the County. He stated that were additional funding to be made available then such areas of funding could be looked at when finalizing final allocations for adoption at the Budget Meeting in late November.

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Following the discussion by the members the budget was adopted on the basis of;

- (a) Transfer of €12,780 from subservice A0101 Maintenance of La Housing Units to F0401 Community Grants.
- (b) Confirmation that the allocation to street cleaning would be reviewed to ensure fair allocation to Loughrea MD.
- (c) Clarification re D0905 Economic Development & Promotion expenditure.

**CRÍOCHNAIGH AN CRUINNIÚ ANSIN.**

Approved by:



**Cllr Michael “Moegie” Maher**

**Cathaoirleach**

**Municipal District of Loughrea**