

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 15 November 2022 at 11.00 am**

I LATHAIR:

Cathaoirleach

Cllr. P.J. Murphy

Baill:

Cllr's. G. Donohue,
Cllr M. Kinane,
Cllr.I. Canning,
Cllr. J. McClearn,
Cllr. G Finnerty,
Cllr. D. Kelly,

Oifigigh:

Ms. E. Ruane, Director of Services
Ms. A. Fenton A/Head of Finance
Ms. R. Lowe, Senior Engineer
Mr. G. Haugh, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. J. Coyle, Executive Engineer
Mr. N. Kennedy, Executive Engineer
Mr. E. Gallagher, Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. M. Flynn, Administrative Officer
Ms. S. Cleary, Staff Officer

Leithscealta:

Cllrs. Joe Byrne, Michael Maher, Shane Curley

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

Cllr. Murphy requested all present to stand in silence for 1 minute in memory of Ms. Bernie Egan. Ms. Egan was a valued member of Galway County Council Staff and was based in the Portumna Office, she will be sadly missed by staff and the community. The members extended their sympathies to Ms. Egan's family, friends, and colleagues.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Ms. Fenton A/Head of Finance to the meeting, and she then explained that the budget for the Loughrea MD was €10,737,245.00 for 2023 which is an increase on last year's budget by €321,000. She said that the Local Property Tax allocation for 2023 is €14,517,890 and the decision of the Council not to vary this rate has been considered in preparing the budgets. She said that the MD meetings cover the second stage in the budgetary process.

Cllr. J McClearn queried the funding available for the street cleaning budget. Ms Fenton confirmed an increase in this budget for 2023. He proposed that the budget be adopted.

Cllr. G Finnerty acknowledged the work of Ms. Fenton and her team regarding the preparation of the budget. However, he stated he would not be supporting the budget. The main budget is the key, but he expressed his disappointment over the funding for recycling as it will not support a recycling facility in Gort. He also commented on the reduction in the NOM monies from €18,500 ten years ago to €11,000. This funding could be used to deal with flooding matters and minor issues.

Cllr. M Kinane stated that she believed it was correct not to support an increase in LPT or Commercial Rates. In response to a query by Cllr M. Kinane on street cleaning, it was stated that the staff of the area office will continue to manage resources for the roads budget with an emphasis on the street cleaning for the main streets.

In reply to a query by Cllr Kinane, Ms. Fenton clarified that there will be €7,000 available for the Cow Park in 2023. Cllr Kinane said that she will second the motion to adopt the budget if there is funding available to maintain the Cow Park.

In response to a query from Cllr G. Donohue on funding for roads Ms Lowe said that the funding allocation will be notified to GCC in January 2023. The increase in pitch, parks and open spaces was welcome. She also enquired how many new houses are coming on stream for 2023.

Cllr. I Canning complimented Ms. Fenton and her team on the budget preparation but he stated that he cannot support it as every year GCC is underfunded. He stated that there is a shortage of staff and resources in GCC due to lack of funding.

Cllr. D Kelly stated he cannot support the budget as it represents a dismal failing on behalf of Central Government. He complimented Minister Sean Kyne for highlighting the underfunding of Galway County Council.

Cllr. J McClearn said that the Councillors need to speak to the Ministers about the underfunding for GCC and he stated that he has briefed Ministers on the matter. He stated that last September the Councillors had the opportunity to increase LPT and by rejecting the budget today they will change nothing.

Cllr. PJ Murphy thanked Ms. Fenton and her team for all their hard work. He stated that he is supporting the budget.

Ms Fenton explained that there is currently a €2m shortfall in the overall budget for the Council and this considers the extra funding of €2.75m. She acknowledged the comments made by Cllr. Murphy in relation to inflation and explained that there are no other sources of income available to the Council.

In reply to a query on the increased budget for parks, pitches and playing fields, Ms. Fenton said that the budget for Renville Park is included in the Loughrea MD in 2023 and this accounts for the increase.

In response to Cllr. G Donohue's query, Ms. Lowe clarified that Galway City Council were paying 50% of the cost for Renville Park and the park is managed by the staff of the Corporate Services Section, of Galway County Council.

Cllr. G Finnerty outlined that the Members rejected LPT and Rates increases and there is currently a huge inflation cost and public procurement costs have increased by 11%.

In reply to a query on where cuts will be imposed in the budget Ms. Fenton explained that this will be finalised for the budget meeting.

Cllr. J McClearn expressed his dismay with the Fianna Fail Members for rejecting the budget as Minister O' Brien had allocated €2.7 million to GCC.

The members welcomed the increased funding but highlighted that Galway County Council was underfunded.

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

It was proposed by Cllr. Canning seconded by Cllr. Finnerty that the Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Loughrea as prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive be rejected.

The counter proposal that the Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Loughrea as prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive to reject the budget was taken first. A roll call vote taken on the proposal resulted as follows:

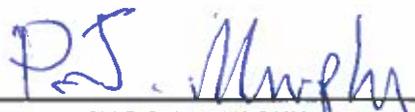
For: Cllr. Finnerty, Cllr Kelly, Cllr Canning
Against: Cllr. Murphy, Cllr Donohue, Cllr McClearn
Abstain Cllr Kinane.

The proposal that the Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Loughrea as prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive to accept the budget was then taken. A roll call vote taken on the proposal resulted as follows:

For: Cllr Donohue, Cllr McClearn, Cllr Kinane, Cllr. Murphy
Against: Cllr. Finnerty, Cllr Kelly, Cllr Canning,

The proposal to approve the Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Loughrea was agreed.

CHRIOGHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN



CLLR P.J. MURPHY
CATHAOIRLEACH, LOUGHREA MD