

**Minutes of Statutory Budget Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Council Chamber, Mtek Building, Armagh Road, Monaghan on Wednesday 23rd November, 2016 at 10.00 a.m.**

**Chair:** Cllr P.J. O’Hanlon, Cathaoirleach

**Present:** Cllrs. Aughey, Bennett, Campbell, Carthy, Conlon, Connolly, Coyle, Crowe, Gilliland, Keelan, Maxwell, McElvaney, McPhillips, B. McKenna, McNally, P. Treanor and S. Treanor.

Mr. E. O’Sullivan, Chief Executive, Mr. P. Clifford and Mr. A. King, Directors of Services, Mr. J. Murray, Head of Finance, Ms. P. Monahan, Financial Management Accountant, Mr. J. McKernan, A/Senior Engineer Roads and Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator.

At the outset the Cathaoirleach proposed a vote of good wishes to Bishop Liam McDaid who is retiring as Bishop of Clogher. The Cathaoirleach thanked Bishop McDaid for his service to the people of the Diocese over the past six years and wished him good health and happiness in his retirement. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Conlon and agreed unanimously.

Cllr Campbell referred to the horrific attack on a young Castleblayney girl on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> November near NUI Maynooth. He condemned outright the horrendous attack and proposed a vote of good wishes to the victim for a speedy recovery. He also expressed the hope that the perpetrator(s) would soon be apprehended.

Cllr McNally seconded Cllr Campbell’s proposal and also condemned the attack. He called on all those who had been on the bus from Monaghan to NUI Maynooth to make contact with the Gardai and help them with their enquiries. Cllrs Crowe, Carthy and Connolly and the Cathaoirleach also spoke on the matter. The proposal was agreed unanimously.

**Budget 2017:**

Mr. E. O’Sullivan stated that this was his first budget as Chief Executive. His report outlined the good work being undertaken throughout the county across all services. The 2017 budget provides for expenditure of €53 million and had been prepared in accordance with the provisions of Section 102 of the Local Government Act 2001.

He referred to the highlights of 2016 and outlined the priorities for 2017. He stated that the preparation of the draft Budget had been challenging and he acknowledged the input of the Municipal Districts and the members of the Corporate Policy Group who met on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October and 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2016. He had tried to ensure that the resources available to the Council are distributed in a balanced way across the services and used as efficiently and effectively as possible.

He paid tribute to the Cathaoirleach and Members of the Council for their courtesy and co-operation since his appointment as Chief Executive and for their assistance in the budgetary process. He also thanked John Murray, Head of Finance, Patricia Monaghan, Financial Accountant and the Directors of Service and their staff for their considerable effort and input into the preparation of the draft Budget.

The Cathaoirleach invited the Head of Finance to outline the provisions of the Draft Budget for 2017 under the various divisions.

Mr. Murray stated that the Draft Budget is based on achieving rates harmonisation over a four year period to be fully achieved by 2019 – the process commenced in 2016. The method of achieving this Rates harmonisation is to apply a Base Year Adjustment (BYA) for the County Council and the former Rating Town Councils. In 2017 the BYA is calculated as the difference between the Annual Rate on Valuation (ARV) adopted for those former rating authority areas in 2014 and that which is adopted by the new authority. The result of the BYA for 2017 is that the ARV for the former Monaghan County Council rating area will remain the same at 56.20. The ARV for the former Town Council Areas change as follows:

	2016	2017
Monaghan	from 69.14 to 65.90	from 65.90 to 62.67
Carrickmacross	from 60.91 to 59.73	from 59.73 to 58.56
Castleblayney	from 56.00 to 56.05	from 56.05 to 56.10
Clones	from 58.90 to 58.23	From 58.23 to 57.55

Mr. Murray then proceeded to outline the provisions contained within the draft Budget under the various divisions.

#### **Division J – Support Services/Central Management Charge**

Mr. John Murray, Head of Finance outlined the proposed expenditure and income provision for 2017 under this division. He indicated that these charges are apportioned across the other divisions.

#### **Division A – Housing and Building:**

Mr. John Murray, Head of Finance outlined the proposed expenditure and income provision for 2017 under this division and responded to queries from the members.

#### **Division B – Roads Transport and Safety:**

Mr. John Murray, Head of Finance outlined the proposed expenditure and income provision for 2017 under this division and responded to queries from the members.

*On the proposal of Cllr Connolly, seconded by Cllr Coyle it was agreed that this Council calls on the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport to re-introduce and provide specific funding for Local Improvement Schemes.*

*On the proposal of Cllr Keelan, seconded by Cllr Maxwell, it was agreed that this Council writes to the Minister and the Department requesting that the road funding allocation is made available to the Council and all Council by each year end in order to allow our roads engineering staff to plan and commence works in a timely fashion.*

*On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor and McNally, it was agreed that this Council requests the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Shane Ross T.D., to sanction a special allocation of funding to address the long waiting list of public lighting schemes in County Monaghan as our current resources are totally insufficient to address the waiting lists. In the case of the Ballybay-Clones M.D. it would take 50 years to address the waiting list at current funding levels.*

#### **Division C – Water Services:**

Mr. Murray informed the members that the net cost to the Council of the Water Services budget for 2017 was circa €149,700.

#### **Division D – Development Management:**

Mr. John Murray, Head of Finance outlined the proposed expenditure and income provision for 2017 under this division and responded to queries from the members.

*On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr Carthy, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council seeks a presentation from Failte Ireland for the purpose of outlining the significance of linking County Monaghan with the large geographical expanse known as Ireland's Ancient East.*

*On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna it was agreed that this Council engage with the PEI Fort Augustus Settlers Association and relevant agencies in their efforts to ensure the replace of the County Monaghan indigenous stone at the recently damaged Irish monument in Charlottetown.*

#### **Division E – Environmental Services**

Cllr McElvaney declared an interest and withdrew from the meeting room ahead of the discussion on Division E.

Mr. John Murray, Head of Finance outlined the proposed expenditure and income provision for 2017 under this division and responded to queries from the members.

*On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr S. Treanor, it was agreed that this Council engages with the Department of the Environment seeking financial support towards developing an additional cell at Scotch Corner, and to include in the negotiation the EPA, the Department of Climate Action and the Regional Waste Authority.*

#### **Division F – Recreation and Amenity**

Mr. John Murray, Head of Finance outlined the proposed expenditure and income provision for 2017 under this division and responded to queries from the members.

Cllr Bennett proposed, Cllr P. Treanor seconded, that Monaghan County Council provides a budget to help maintain Hollywood Park. Can the Council allocate €10,000 from the Ballybay-

Clones M.D. Budget to assist the Park. Can the Council also become partners with Hollywood Park Development Committee in order to help maintain and develop it?

Mr. P. Clifford informed the meeting that there was already funding of €5,000 provided in the budget to assist with costs for the park. He stated that there may be opportunities for funding under the Leader Programme.

It was agreed that the matter be referred to the Ballybay-Clones M.D. for consideration in January 2017 when the new budget is in place.

#### **Division G – Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare:**

Mr. John Murray, Head of Finance outlined the proposed expenditure and income provision for 2017 under this division.

#### **Division H – Miscellaneous Services**

Mr. John Murray, Head of Finance outlined the proposed expenditure and income provision for 2017 under this division.

#### **Adoption of Draft Budget 2017:**

*On the proposal of Cllr S. Treanor, seconded by Cllr P. Connolly, it was unanimously agreed that the Council adopt the draft Budget for 2017, as presented.*

#### **Determination of Annual Rate on Valuation and base year adjustment:**

*On the proposal of Cllr Carthy, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna it was agreed that the general Annual Rate on Valuation for 2017 of €56.20 and the following Base Year Adjustments for former rating authority areas be adopted*

<i>Carrickmacross Town Council</i>	<i>+2.36</i>
<i>Castleblayney Town Council</i>	<i>-0.10</i>
<i>Clones Town Council</i>	<i>+1.35</i>
<i>Monaghan Town Council</i>	<i>+6.47</i>

#### **Refund of rates on vacant commercial premises**

*On the proposal of Cllr Carthy, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna, it was agreed that the level of refund of rates on vacant commercial premises, that are available for rent or lease or are undergoing refurbishment, be 100%.*

