

Budget Meeting 21st November 2016

Minutes of Budget Meeting 2017 of Louth County Council held in County Hall, Dundalk on Monday 21st November 2016

In attendance:

Cathaoirleach: Cllr. P. Bell

Members: Councillors: M. Butler, J. Byrne, T. Byrne, K. Callan, E. Coffey, E. Corrigan, R. Culhane, T. Cunningham, M. Dearey, M. Doyle, K. Flood, F. Godfrey, J. Cassidy-Green, C. Keelan, A. Watters, C. Markey, J. McGahon, P. McGeough, K. Meenan, D. Minogue, L. Reilly, P. Smith, J. Tenanty, O. Tully, M. Yore

Officials: J. Martin, Chief Executive
J. McGuinness Director of Services
E. O’Gorman, Director of Services
F. Pentony, Director of Services
P. Donnelly, Director of Services
B. Woods, Head of Finance
P. Finn, Senior Engineer
M. T. Daly, Senior Executive Officer
A. Sherry, Senior Executive Officer
B. Lynch, Financial Accountant
R. McAuley Financial Accountant

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Minute No. 198/16

Draft Budget 2017

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Paul Bell formally opened the meeting to consider the Draft Budget for 2017.

The Chief Executive referred to the draft budget document that was circulated to the members providing for expenditure totalling €98.88M and income of €56.59m. The balance of €42.29m is funded from a combination of the Local Property Tax/General Purposes Grant and commercial rates. The Local property Tax/General Purpose Grant is €9.87m with the €32.42m balance being met by Commercial Rates. The Chief Executive pointed out that the process of realigning the rate throughout the county was continuing. The rate for the Dundalk and Drogheda areas is proposed to be reduced from €64.50 to €63.50 and the rate in the County area from €56.00 to €57.00.

She informed the members that most of the budget provisions were the same as 2016. She highlighted the significant challenges that lay ahead such as collection of outstanding Commercial Rates. She referred to the urgent need to increase the supply of housing and alluded to the newly adopted Development Levy Scheme which should help to increase the volume of properties being built. The Chief Executive also made reference to the potential impact of Brexit on the County. She emphasised the need to encourage economic activity particularly in the tourism sector through the Council's support for festivals.

Minute No. 199/16

Commercial Rates

It was proposed by Cllr. Doyle and seconded by Cllr. T. Byrne that the commercial rates applicable to vacant properties below 5,000 square feet in size be reduced from 50% to 25%. It was pointed out to the members that any proposed reduction in income would require a corresponding reduction in expenditure. It was also pointed out that the information in relation to the financial impact of the proposal was not readily available.

Minute No. 200/16

Members Input to Budget

Members expressed the view that they needed more guidance and input in relation to the budget well in advance of the meeting and that an annual budget workshop was required.

Minute No. 201/16

Municipal District Allocations

It was proposed by Cllr. Callan, seconded by Cllr. Tully and agreed by the members that the allocation for the Municipal District allocations be increased to €75,000 and the provision for member's gratuities be reduced by €30,000.

Minute No. 202/16

Budget Programme Proposals

The Directors of Service with responsibility for the various service deliveries and statutory functions addressed the member's queries in respect of the expenditure and income proposals.

Minute No. 203/16

Adoption of the Budget 2017

Proposed by: Cllr R. Culhane

Seconded by: Cllr. M. Dearey

And resolve

That having considered the draft budget, subject to the provisions of Section 103 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended by the local Government reform Act 2014) to pass a resolution adopting the draft budget for 2017 with the following amendments;

€30,000 to be transferred from H0907, Councillors Gratuity Provision to F0401, Municipal District Allocation.

€14,900 to be transferred from H0904, Councillors Conferences to F0401, Councillors Allocations.

Shall subject to Section 10 of the Local Government (Financial Provisions) Act 1978 by resolution determine in accordance with the local authority budget as so adopted (as set out in Tables A to F) the annual rate on valuation to be levied and where appropriate

have regard to the base year adjustment determined in accordance with section 29 of the Local Government Act 2014.

Also to agree the rate of refund for the rates on vacant premises as provided for in section 29 of SI226 of 2014.

For: Cllrs. P. Bell, T. Byrne, K. Callan, R. Culhane, M. Dearey, F. Godfrey, C. Keelan, C. Markey, J. McGahon, D. Minogue, L. Reilly, P. Smith, O. Tully

Total: **Thirteen (13)**

Against: Cllrs. M. Butler, J. Byrne, E. Corrigan, M. Doyle, K. Flood, J. Cassidy-Green, P. McGeough, K. Meenan, A. Watters

Total: **Nine (9)**

Abstain: None (0)

Absent: Cllrs. A. Cassidy, E. Coffey, T. Cunningham, P. Savage, T. Sharkey, J. Tenanty, M. Yore

Total: **Seven (7)**

The Cathaoirleach confirmed the Budget for 2017 as amended approved.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

The Minutes were confirmed at a meeting of Council held on:-

Date: _____

Cathaoirleach: _____

Meetings Administrator: _____