

Budget Meeting 20th November 2017

Minutes of Budget Meeting of Louth County Council held in County Hall, Dundalk on Monday 20th November 2017

In attendance:

Cathaoirleach: Cllr. C. Markey

Members: Councillors: P. Bell, M. Butler, J. Byrne, T. Byrne, K. Callan, A. Campbell, E. Corrigan, R. Culhane, T. Cunningham, M. Dearey, M. Doyle, K. Flood, F. Godfrey, C. Keelan, J. McGahon, P. McGeough, R. O' Murchu, D. Minogue, L. Reilly, D. Saurin, P. Savage, T. Sharkey, P. Smith, J. Tenanty, O. Tully, A. Watters, M. Yore

Officials: J. Martin, Chief Executive
F. Pentony, Director of Services
J. McGuinness, Director of Services
E. O' Gorman, Director of Services
P. Donnelly, Director of Services
B. Woods, Head of Finance
A. Lawler, Senior Executive Officer
A. Sherry, Meetings Administrator
J. Lawrence, Senior Executive Officer
C. Moss, Senior Executive Officer
B. Lynch, Financial Accountant
R. McAuley, Financial Accountant
J. Smith, Administrative Officer

Apologies: Cllr. E. Coffey

Minute No. 212/17

Draft Budget 2018

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Colm Markey formally opened the meeting to consider the Draft Budget for 2018.

In a presentation the management team outlined the key aspects of the draft budget with expenditure of €103.22M and income from local property tax of €9.87m and rates income of €31.91M. The €2m increase in wages, salaries and pension costs was highlighted. Members were also informed of the recent circular regarding Councillor's remuneration and expenses and it was proposed by the Head of Finance that the additional cost would be met by reducing the provision for Councillor's pension gratuities. The level of expenditure for each directorate was detailed and key activities

were highlighted. Members were informed that no progress could be made in 2018 in relation to the realignment of the rate throughout the County due to financial pressures.

A discussion followed with member's questions being answered by the management team. Concern was expressed at the decision to increase the rate in the county while not reducing the town rate.

In the course of the debate several members expressed their dissatisfaction with the proposed reduction in the discretionary budgets for the municipal districts along with the removal of the plastic recycling banks throughout the County. Members also expressed the view that there was a lack of engagement by the management team with them and their belief that the local Government Reform Act 2014 had undermined local democracy. The need for a Councillors Charter to be drawn up was raised.

The members were advised that failure to adopt a budget would result in the matter being referred to the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government and that the Minister had the power to abolish the Council and appoint a commissioner in these circumstances. Several members made clear their intention to reject the draft budget and the view was expressed that it may be a positive move for the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government to intervene.

It was proposed by Cllr. P. Smith and seconded by O. Tully to adjourn the meeting for 7 days.

A roll call vote followed:

For: Cllrs. T. Byrne, R. Culhane, M. Doyle, C. Keelan, C. Markey, J. McGahon, D. Minogue, L. Reilly, P. Smith, O. Tully

Total: **Ten (10)**

Against: Cllrs. P. Bell, M. Butler, J. Byrne, K. Callan, A. Campbell, E. Corrigan, T. Cunningham, M. Dearey, K. Flood, F. Godfrey, P. McGeough, R. O' Murchu, D. Saurin, P. Savage, T. Sharkey, J. Tenanty, A. Watters, M. Yore

Total: **Eighteen (18)**

Absent: Cllr. E. Coffey (1)

It was proposed by Cllr. K. Callan and seconded by J. Byrne that a vote be taken on the draft budget circulated.

A roll call vote followed:-

For: Cllrs. R. Culhane, M. Doyle, C. Markey, J. McGahon, D. Minogue, P. Smith, O. Tully

Total: **Seven (7)**

Against: Cllrs. P. Bell, M. Butler, J. Byrne, T. Byrne, K. Callan, A. Campbell, E. Corrigan, T. Cunningham, M. Dearey, K. Flood, F. Godfrey, C. Keelan, P. McGeough, R. O' Murchu, L. Reilly, D. Saurin, P. Savage, T. Sharkey, J. Tenanty, A. Watters, M. Yore

Total: **Twenty-one (21)**

Absent: Cllr. E. Coffey (1)

That concluded the business of the meeting.

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

Date: _____

Cathaoirleach: _____

Meetings Administrator: _____