

# Budget Meeting 2nd December 2018

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Minutes of the adjourned Budget Meeting of Louth County Council held in County Hall, Dundalk on Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2018 at 6.00 p.m.

**In attendance:**

**Cathaoirleach:** Cllr. L. Reilly

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

**Apologies:** Cllr. T. Byrne

**Officials:** J. Martin, Chief Executive  
F. Pentony, Director of Services  
J. McGuinness, Director of Services  
P. Donnelly, Director of Services  
B. Woods, Head of Finance  
C. Moss, Senior Executive Officer  
B. Lynch, Financial Accountant  
R. McAuley, Financial Accountant

## **Minute No. 222/18**

### **Draft Budget 2019**

The meeting opened with the Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Liam Reilly, advising the members of their particular statutory role and with a number of questions being raised under the following headings:

- Local Authority Members Expenses
- Capital Programme Works
- Drogheda Tourist Office Services
- Town and Village Renewal
- Street cleansing
- Fleadh expenditure
- Use of public relations company and expenditure for same
- Spending on consultants generally and legal costs
- Operation of piers.

The meeting was adjourned until 19:30 to allow collation of responses to these matters.

## Minute No. 223/18

### Recommencement of the Meeting

The members were advised on the matters raised earlier. Further points were raised, including:

- Legal contract costs
- Term of legal services
- Further queries on consultants costs
- Grace write-offs and bad debt provision

On the conclusion of these points, the Chief Executive, Joan Martin, advised the members that she had yet to hear an explanation on why the budget has been refused, and whilst she had continually made herself available to the members, no contacts have been made with her in the last three weeks.

**It was proposed by Cllr. T. Sharkey and seconded by Cllr. M. Doyle to adjourn for 30 minutes.**

A roll call vote followed:

**For:** Cllrs. P. Bell, J. Byrne, K. Callan, A. Campbell, E. Coffey, E. Corrigan, R. Culhane, T. Cunningham, M. Doyle, K. Flood, F. Godfrey, C. Keelan, C. Markey, J. McGahon, P. McGeough, D. Minogue, R. O'Murchu, D. Saurin, P. Savage, T. Sharkey, P. Smith, O. Tully, A. Watters, M. Yore.

Total: **Twenty-four (24)**

**Against:** Cllrs. M. Butler, M. Dearey, L. Reilly, J. Tenanty.

Total: **Four (4)**

**Absent:** Cllrs. T. Byrne.

Total: **One (1)**

## Minute No. 224/18

The meeting re-convened with further discussions and on the proposal of Cllr. C. Markey and seconding of Cllr. M. Dearey, a proposal was made to vary the budget presented on the basis of the following:

- A charge of €1.10 per hour for pay parking for both towns,
- The removal of €1.00 all day charge in Drogheda.

Both of these were to be funded from the following cuts, under the heading of Economic Development promotion:

Louth Economic Development & Promotion (LEF / Regional Action Plan for Jobs)	€90,000
Shop Front and Business Incentive Schemes	€91,000
Louth County Enterprise fund	€15,000
Conferences abroad	€8,500
Town twinning	€5,000
Sports Hall	€15,000
Central Management Charge	€25,500

In response to this combined proposal, the Chief Executive reminded the members that they were at risk of adopting an insufficient budget, which is contrary to their statutory duty.

After some discussion in relation to issues in regard to the implementation of the cuts proposed, a further amendment was proposed by Cllr. C. Keelan and seconding by Cllr. E. Coffey to vary the adopted budget in a similar basis to the previous proposal, however maintaining the €1.00 a day parking charge in Drogheda and assigning the projected income of €50,000 to Economic Development.

The Chief Executive pointed out that some of the proposed reductions and expenditure were not actually available and cautioned the members about voting on the original motion as it was not a valid motion as the funds proposed to be cut were not available. She indicated that they would not be adopting a sufficient budget and that they would have wilfully adopted an insufficient budget.

The amended motion was then taken, and a roll call vote followed:

**For:** Cllrs. M. Butler, E. Coffey, R. Culhane, M. Dearey, M. Doyle, C. Keelan, C. Markey, J. McGahon, D. Minogue, L. Reilly, P. Savage, J. Tenanty, O. Tully, M. Yore.

Total: **Fourteen (14)**

**Against:** Cllrs. P. Bell, J. Byrne, K. Callan, A. Campbell, E. Corrigan, T. Cunningham, K. Flood, F. Godfrey, P. McGeough, R. O' Murchu, D. Saurin, T. Sharkey, P. Smith, A. Watters.

Total: **Fourteen (14)**

**Absent:** Cllr. T. Byrne.

Total: **One (1)**

The roll call resulted in a 14-14 vote with the casting vote of the Cathaoirleach supporting the motion.

The Chief Executive advised that the members that they had voted on an invalid motion as the funds were not available for the particular cuts proposed.

After further discussions, the meeting was again adjourned for a period of five minutes.

### **Minute No. 225/18**

The meeting reconvened at 22:00, and the Chair advised of the shortfall. After some discussion, the Chief Executive indicated that every deduction that was made will have an impact on citizens and suggested that the rates write-off could be considered with regard to assisting the achievement of a balanced budget. The Chief Executive also proposed that if the Council received any additional discretionary funding in 2019, that the area of cuts would be addressed first

On the proposal of Cllr. J. McGahon and seconded by Cllr. M. Dearey, a varied budget was proposed, which was based on a pay parking charge of €1.10 per hour and an all day parking charge of €1.00 per day in Drogheda, combined with cuts in the following codes:

Louth County Enterprise Fund	€15,000
Town Twinning	€5,000
Sports Hall	€15,000
Foreign Travel and Conferences abroad	€8,500
Shop Front Grants	€25,000
Business Incentive Schemes	€61,000
Rates Write-Off	€45,000
Central Management Charge	€25,500

This proposal also included the transfer of €18,300 from members' conferences to members' allocations

This motion was based on 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 2019 with amendment and shall be 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 Reform Act 2014 and to agree the rate of refund for the Rates on vacant premises as provided for in Article 29 of the Local Government (Financial and Audit Procedures) Regulations 2014 (SI 226 of 2014) and this was to be in consideration with Article 7 of the Local Government (Performance of Reserved Functions in respect to Municipal District Members) Regulations, 2014.

A roll call vote followed:

**For:** Cllrs. M. Butler, E. Coffey, R. Culhane, M. Dearey, M. Doyle, C. Keelan, C. Markey, J. McGahon, D. Minogue, L. Reilly, P. Savage, J. Tenanty, O. Tully, M. Yore.

Total: **Fourteen (14)**

**Against:** Cllrs. P. Bell, J. Byrne, K. Callan, A. Campbell, E. Corrigan, T. Cunningham, K. Flood, F. Godfrey, P. McGeough, R. O' Murchu, D. Saurin, T. Sharkey, P. Smith, A. Watters.

Total: **Fourteen (14)**

**Absent:** Cllr. T. Byrne.

Total: **One (1)**

The roll call resulted in a 14-14 vote with the casting vote of the Cathaoirleach supporting the motion.

That concluded the business of the meeting

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Cathaoirleach: \_\_\_\_\_

Meetings Administrator: \_\_\_\_\_