

**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COURTHOUSE, ROSCOMMON ON THURSDAY THE 26<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2015 AT 11.00 A.M.**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Paddy Kilduff, Cathaoirleach      **PRESIDED**

**MEMBERS:** Cllr. V. Byrne      Cllr. I. Connaughton      Cllr. D. Connolly      Cllr. M. Creaton  
Cllr. N. Dineen      Cllr. R. Doherty      Cllr. L. Fallon      Cllr. P. Fitzmaurice  
Cllr. M. Hopkins      Cllr. J. Cummins      Cllr. J. Keogh      Cllr. O. Leyden  
Cllr. M. Mulligan      Cllr. E. Murphy      Cllr. J. Naughten      Cllr. T. Ward.

**APOLOGIES:**      Cllr. K. Shanagher

**OFFICIALS:**      Mr. Eugene Cummins, Chief Executive.  
Ms. Majella Hunt, Director of Services.  
Mr. Martin Lydon, Head of Finance & Planning.  
Mr. John O'Rourke, A/ Director of Services.  
Mr. Pat Murtagh, A/Director of Services.  
Ms. Fíona ní Chuinn, Meetings Administrator.

**111.15. DRAFT BUDGET 2016**

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the members to the Budget Meeting and informed them that the Budget was broken up into eight Divisions plus the 3 year Capital Programme. Each Director of Services would outline the Budget to the members for their respective areas of responsibility. He thanked the members of the Corporate Policy Group for their hard work and assistance in the preparation of the draft Budget. He also welcomed the Transition Year students from the C.B.S. to the meeting

It was agreed that the Resolution for adoption of the Budget would be taken at 4.00 p.m.

Mr. Eugene Cummins, Chief Executive, addressed the members and stated that the draft budget for 2016 has been prepared in accordance with the provision of Section 102 of the Local Government Act 2001 and reflects the input from the members of the Corporate Policy Group.

He continued that the new focus and priority for Roscommon County Council is that of economic and community development. This will require a restructuring of the organisation with a more expanded and meaningful role for the Municipal Districts while the Plenary Council concentrate on strategic issues to grow and drive the County forward.

He commended the members for not reducing the Local Property Tax. He stated that the draft budget as presented allows for the provision for the focus and the various funding streams to facilitate for the preparation of plans and policies to drive the county forward.

He continued that local authorities are required by law to adopt a budget that is sufficient to meet their proposed expenditure – total estimated expenditure must be met with total estimated income from commercial rates, local property tax, charges for goods and services, and government grants. In addition to adopting the budget for the coming year, Elected Members must also

determine the annual rate on the valuation that should be levied on commercial properties. The Draft Budget is based on no increase to the current Annual Rate on Valuation.

The Chief Executive thanked the Cathaoirleach, Elected Members and staff of the Council for their assistance in the preparation of the draft budget.

Finally, he thanked, especially, Mr. Martin Lydon, Head of Finance and Planning and the staff of the Finance section, the Directors and all staff who contributed to the preparation of the draft budget.

**The Chief Executive recommended the Budget for adoption.**

Directors of Service, Ms. Majella Hunt, Mr. Martin Lydon, Mr. John O'Rourke and Mr. Pat Murtagh introduced the services under Division A,B,C,D,E,F,G & H namely Housing and Building; Roads Transportation and Safety; Water Services; Development Management; Environmental Services; Recreation and Amenity; Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare and Miscellaneous Services .

The following issues were raised by Members:-

- Compliment the work of the Head of Finance and staff of the Finance Section
- Welcome the new Tenant Purchase Scheme
- Request a more detailed presentation on the Tenant Purchase Scheme at the next Municipal District meeting
- Welcome the allocation for swimming pools – great need for recreational facilities in the county
- Number of bridges in needs of repair
- Need for low cost safety measures by means of flashing lights
- Welcome €35,000 allocation for burial grounds
- Query if Fairymount Graveyard is included
- Query what reservoirs are to be demolished
- Welcome the continuation of the Green Schools
- Welcome the introduction of the Rates Incentive Scheme
- Concern that banking sector will not be on board with the new Tenant Purchase Scheme and financing will be left to the local authorities.
- Need for greater flexibility if local authority are to become lenders
- Compliment the Housing Section for work on affordable sites at Forest View, Boyle
- Query the possibility of residents purchasing the remaining 9 sites in Forest View on a conditional basis
- Welcome the increase in allocation to amenity grants
- Excellent work being done through Local Enterprise Office
- Welcome the allocation of €1.2m to the Library Services
- Improvement works required to many roads in the county – onus on TII to address many of these issues
- Query the level of funding and support provided by Roscommon County Council for community tourism offices
- Update sought on Kilbegley Cemetery
- Funding ring-fenced for maintenance in Monksland
- Roscommon County Council should call in bonds in relation to unfinished housing estates
- Household Charge taken by Central Government has made no impact to the budget of Roscommon County Council

- Inadequate amount of funding allocated for land drainage
- Welcome hot-desking facility
- Huge improvement on waste management – will funding include pay-by-weight?
- Is funding included in the budget for the 2016 Programme?
- Additional staff resources required in Housing Section to deal with homelessness, voluntary bodies, RAS, etc.
- Issue with overgrown trees in many graveyards
- Welcome allocation of €25,000 in funding for Connacht Fleadh in Strokestown
- Roscommon County Council have not made any contribution of support to the Roscommon Racecourse
- Query the type of upgrade of public lighting – what are the cost and energy savings
- Safety issue at Mount Talbot National School – flashing lights required
- Need for public lighting and footpaths on N61
- Need for Carrikeeny Road to be upgraded to a regional road
- Government pushing people into long term rented accommodation
- How will funding to Town Teams include community groups outside of the main towns in the county – villages need to be able to apply for funding to improve their areas economically
- No provision in Ballaghaderreen to cope with the issue of homelessness or emergency accommodation
- Update sought on Ballaghaderreen Swimming Pool
- Welcome allocation of funding for Rathcroghan Heritage Site
- Flashing lights required in Ballinlough
- Query the possibility of funding for Elphin Library
- Lack of notice in relation to housing rent review
- Query the possibility of creating a small museum in the Old Courthouse in Elphin
- Welcome proposals in place and the removal of boil water notices
- Is there a proposed timeframe for the introduction of HAP
- Disappointed at the loss of the 15% discretion rule in terms of assessing housing rents
- 15% rule should be reinstated for the assessing of pensioners rents
- How are housing rents remaining at €5.7m despite rents being increased
- Positive move for Roscommon County Council to new headquarters
- Allocation of additional €3,000 to tackle homelessness is inadequate
- Welcome new pedestrian access to the centre of Roscommon Town
- Traffic calming measures required at Hodson Bay and Ballybay Church
- Can Roscommon County Council carry out an audit of civic amenity sites and waste management services used by the public
- When will funds come on stream for Oran Realignment
- How many houses will be refurbished in 2016
- Social Housing Strategy aims to construct 18 houses over the next 2-3 years – inadequate
- How do Roscommon County Council intend to reduce housing waiting lists
- Update on refurbishment of Elphin Fire Station requested
- Will work on bridge battlements be included in the budget?
- Proposal to allocate a small percentage of funding towards LIS Schemes

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Cummins

**SECONDED** by Councillor Murphy

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council would carry out a mid-year review of funds and if there is any surplus money, that it would be diverted to finance Housing Grants.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Cummins

**SECONDED** by Councillor Doherty

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council will look at re-introducing CIS Schemes as part of the Roads Programme for 2016.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Cummins

**SECONDED** by Councillor Doherty

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council would investigate the possibility of using funds allocated through Environmental Protection to maintain and improve the appearance of bring banks.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Naughten

**SECONDED** by Councillor Ward

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council write to the Minister for Finance to intervene to force the banks to release the bonds sought by Roscommon County Council

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Fallon

**SECONDED** by Councillor Ward

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council carry out an assessment of vacant plots in all burial grounds in the county.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Connaughton

**SECONDED** by Councillor Leyden

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council support the Roscommon Racecourse by means of a staff day out or sponsor a race.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Fitzmaurice

**SECONDED** by Councillor Leyden

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council allocate €5,000 towards community awards

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Leyden

**SECONDED** by Councillor Doherty

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council call for investment in social housing in 2016

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Leyden

**SECONDED** by Councillor Connaughton

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council seek funding for works to Edenville House in the next round of funding from Fáilte Ireland.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Ward

**SECONDED** by Councillor Fallon

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council request the TII to address the provision of a right turning lane at Ballymurray in the interest of safety.

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Connaughton

**SECONDED** by Councillor Leyden

That the cost of supporting Roscommon Racecourse be split equally between each Municipal District.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Murphy

**SECONDED** by Councillor Cummins

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council request the Government to introduce new legislation whereby developers who were in NAMA but are now again making profit be obliged to complete their unfinished estates.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Cummins

**SECONDED** by Councillor Byrne

It was **AGREED** that the €8,300 be taken from each Municipal District Budget (non-TiC Public Lighting) and given to Amenity Grants to bring to a total of €59,900 for 2016.

The Directors of Services responded to all queries raised as follows:-

- Information of the new Tenant Purchase Scheme will be circulated to all members and a member from Housing will be happy to give a presentation on the new scheme at the next Council meeting, if so required.
- The figure for income from housing rents remains the same as 2015 as some rents has decreased as a result of the rent review while others have increased.
- Differential Rents Scheme is a national scheme based on the Housing Act – Roscommon County Council does not have any remit to make changes.
- No provision for emergency accommodation in every town in Co. Roscommon
- No definite timeframe for the rollout of HAP – have to assume 2016
- Welcome comments on swimming pools
- Flashing lights are currently used at accident black spots
- Municipal District Engineers aware of the problem areas however funding is the issue
- Funding from the TII is based on accident figures
- Roscommon County Council has been in communication with the TII in relation to turning lanes on the N61 with no positive response.
- Archaeological study of Kilbegley Cemetery not yet complete
- Aim to deal with a percentage of overgrown trees in cemeteries on an annual basis within existing resources
- Gardaí are aware of the issue of speed in Ballinlough village
- Upgrade required to Elphin Library – Government have announced a capital library scheme
- Will investigate options for acquiring funding for Edenville House
- 8 reservoirs have been indentified for demolition over the next 3 years – these are Strokestown, Gallowstown, Keadue, Tullyloyd, 2 in Boyle, Roosky and Castlereagh
- Further household waste management regulations will be introduced in July 2016 – Local Authority will have a watching brief – may be necessary for SPC to adopt bye-laws
- Issues being addressed in Lough Gowna
- Procurement of 5 fire engines for the counties of Leitrim, Galway, Sligo, Donegal & Roscommon – location of new appliance in Co. Roscommon is not yet determined as an assessment needs to be carried out on existing vehicles.
- An allocation for the 2016 Celebrations of €100,000 is included under the heading of Tourism Development and Promotion in the Budget

- It is a decision of the Municipal District to allocate an amount of funds to support the Roscommon Racecourse – there is an allocation of €85,000 for the Municipal District members to decide how it is spent.
- Public lighting money is for the payment of lighting as well as the maintenance of lights
- The funding of land drainage works is part of the Municipal District Budget
- As determined by the Planning & Development Act, a housing estate is a development of 2 or more houses. There are 211 unfinished estates in the Co. of Roscommon.
- If additional funding becomes available for community awards funding this will be communicated through the CPG
- The homeless budget is demand-led with 90% of expenditure recoupable
- On 17<sup>th</sup> April last, Roscommon County Council received notification of their housing budget for the period 2015 – 2017 which amounted to €5.6million. This allowed for the provision of 152 housing units which consists of 25 acquisitions, 18 new builds and 109 long-term leasing through the RAS Scheme.
- Housing budget is demand-led
- Voids programme in place for the upgrade of 120 houses
- There are different housing schemes throughout the year available aside from the Budget as presented.
- Under Waste Management Regulations, Contractors are obliged to create a database of users and make this available to the local authority
- No capital funding yet provided for the upgrade of the Elphin Fire Station – a number of repairs and general maintenance works has been carried out over the last number of years

**As all members had spoken on the Budget the Cathaoirleach called for Motions on the adoption of the Budget.**

#### **112.15. AN CATHAOIRLEACH AGUS AN LEAS-CATHAOIRLEACH**

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Murphy

**SECONDED** by Councillor Ward

And **AGREED** that pursuant to Section 143(a) & 143(b) of the Local Government Act, 2001, “That Roscommon County Council pay an Annual Allowance of €20,000 and €4,000 in 2016 to the Cathaoirleach and Leas-Cathaoirleach of the County Council respectively to cover the reasonable expenses incurred in respect of attendance at functions”.

#### **113.15. SECTION 76 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001**

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Ward

**SECONDED** by Councillor Hopkins

And **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council authorise the incurring of reasonable expenditure in connection with receptions, entertainment and the making of presentations to distinguished persons and in connection with the holding of special events relevant to its functions during 2016.

#### **114.15. ADOPTION OF THE BUDGET 2016**

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Fallon

**SECONDED** by Councillor Dineen

And **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council by resolution adopt for the financial year ending 31st December, 2015, the Budget as set out in Tables A, B, C, D, E & F, as amended.

**115.15. ADOPTION OF ANNUAL RATE ON VALUATION**

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Murphy

**SECONDED** by Councillor Ward

And **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council determine in accordance with the Budget, as adopted the rates set out in Tables A and C to be the annual rate on valuation to be levied for the financial year ending 31st December, 2016, for the purposes set out in those tables, as amended.

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Fitzmaurice

**SECONDED** by Councillor Leyden

And **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council set the rate of refund in relation to vacant properties at 100% as per Section 31 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and The Local Government (Financial and Audit Procedures) Regulations 2014

**116.15. SECTION 135 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001**

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Connaughton

**SECONDED** by Councillor Leyden

And **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council by resolution adopt the Three Year Capital Programme (2015-2017) as per Section 135 of the Local Government Act.

**This concluded the business of the meeting.**

**The foregoing Minutes are  
Confirmed and Signed:**

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**Meetings Administrator**

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**Cathaoirleach**

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**Countersigned**